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Rev. David
Devine, D.D.
and the Devil

Or, The Devil in
his own Defence.



By . . .

RICHARD
McALLISTER
ORME.



THE DEVIL REVEALS HIMSELF.

REV. DAVID DEVINE, D.D.,
AND THE DEVIL;

OR,

THE DEVIL IN HIS OWN DEFENCE.

BY

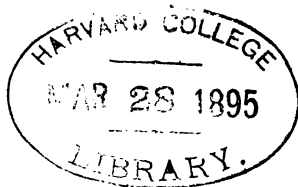
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A WORD TO THE READER.

THIS book is more suggestive of new thoughts and ideas on an old subject than any ever before given to the public. The Devil is placed in his true light and position, and he is not the evil many imagine him to be. He fully explains himself in his talks with Rev. Dr. Devine. You can learn how God uses him for His own purposes.

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REV. DAVID DEVINE, D.D.,
AND
THE DEVIL.

CHAPTER I.

REV. DR. DEVINE'S REVERIE—WHAT TO PREACH.

IN this age, when the supernatural is again stepping to the front, and men can once more converse with the departed, and the Devil, for a surprise, does reveal himself to a chosen or special few for purposes direct, as he did two and three thousand years ago, it is not strange that spirits, ghosts, or sprights should be seen and talked with. There are too many facts on record—well authenticated facts—to deny that the souls of the departed do manifest themselves to some, and that the Devil in his peculiar protean shapes does pay visits to mortals to impress them as to his presence and influence. Spirits do manifest themselves to the living.

A number of years ago a bright and brilliant young divine, about thirty-five years of age, reputed for his eloquence and theological learning, found himself made a Doctor of Divinity by his *Alma Mater*. Of course he

was pleased and flattered with the honor, and appreciated the compliment, coming so soon in his ministry. He said to himself: "I must show myself worthy of the degree and the honor so unexpectedly conferred. Only twelve years a minister!"

He thought over in his mind what should be the subject of some of his sermons, to give him something of a reputation for originality and profound learning. He thought on and over many subjects. Thus he soliloquized:

1. The inheritance and character of "Original Sin," in all of its bearings and influence upon the human race. "No, that will not do; it is an old subject, and has been preached upon and written about until it is stale. Besides, if man has inherited sin through Adam, and that without any proviso as to believing in him or not as our first father, and we are also told, 'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,' I am afraid that I will have to theorize, sophisticize, and be forever trying to make clear that which is not very clear to my mind, to say the least of it. I will not bother with 'Original Sin,' for there is enough sin without our old father Adam's slip-up or fall. He suffered enough for his sin, and I am satisfied."

2. The doctrine of "Election and Predestination" presented itself to his mind. "Worse still; that has been fought over ever since the days of John Calvin. It is repugnant to the common-sense justice of man; and, to tell the honest truth, half who preach such a doctrine do not really believe in it. I might truly call that Calvin's 'original sin,' for he has made many a minister to sin in preaching it, and trying to explain such a doc-

trine so full of damnation and condemnation. I don't believe in it myself, but it won't do to say such a thing in the pulpit. I will not touch the subject with a ten-foot pole. No election or predestination in my sermons."

3. "Apostolical Succession" next found a place in his thoughts. "The people are fast outgrowing such ideas; they are taking broader views of the teachings of Jesus and St. Paul. St. Paul said he was sent to the Gentiles, and Peter to the Jews. St. Paul certainly felt himself wonderfully independent of Peter and the rest of the Apostles. He so says, and so taught. Right there began a conflict in the Church, which has never been settled, and never will be as long as we have the writings of St. Paul. Heresy and schism were rampant in his day. There is no use trying to explain or reconcile anything about 'Apostolical Succession.' The best thing to do, is to stick close to the teachings of Jesus. All can understand Him. He is clear; He is to the point. He talked truth and common sense, and hence the common people heard Him gladly."

4. He then thought of "Baptism," and the different modes and manners. "Worse and worse! That is old fighting ground, and nothing can be made out of that. To explain the old mode and manner of baptism, I would have to tell the truth, and say that the original John the Baptist's mode was to baptize naked. In John's own dialect he was called 'John the Washer,' and not John the Baptist. The Jews were washers—'Go wash in Jordan,' 'Wash me from mine iniquity,' etc.—and not baptizers as the people are to-day. But it is all a waste of words. Let those who want to be

immersed, be it so done to them. I am satisfied with our mode."

5. Then he thought he would see what he could do with the "Trinity." "Worse than all the rest put together! What a mental labyrinth I would get my congregation into! All those who have tried to explain the mystery of the God-head, have made it about as clear as mud; and, to my mind, I could not make it any clearer. It was a knotty dogma in the Church when St. John took hold to explain it. The best way to explain that dogma, is to talk about Jesus as a man, and try to live like Him when He was in the flesh, as near as a mortal man can approach anything that is purely divine in nature. No 'Trinity' in my sermons.

6. "Well," thought he, "I might take hold of the 'Prophecies' concerning the coming of the Christ; but as everybody believes that Christ has come, except the Jews, my congregation will not be interested in the subject unless I should try to make missionaries of them to convert the Jews, and I am not paid for that kind of service. Besides, when a man has a thing, he cares very little about the details as to how or where he got it. He has it, and he is satisfied; and that is common sense, after all. We have Jesus the Christ, and I am satisfied.

7. "Well, there is 'Faith,' as taught by St. Paul; and 'Works,' as insisted upon by St. James. I could reconcile them, I think, with but little trouble; but the subject is a sort of dry platitude to the common mind, and I do not think my hearers will take much interest in close logic and deep reasoning. If I can only get them to work more and think less, I am satisfied. 'Faith and

works' are twin sisters, and I will preach that when I touch on such subjects.

8. "There is the 'Blindness of the Jews,' in not recognizing Jesus as the Christ, as the promised Messiah. But as my congregation believe them not only to be blind, but fools withal on that point, there is no virtue in convincing those already convinced. However, the Jews are a long way from being either blind or fools. And if they were to enter the theological arena with the Christians, in a theological dispute, and give an explanation of their prophecies, I would fear for the result. They would make a dozen converts to their explanations and interpretations of their scriptures, where we could hope to make one from their number. To tell the honest truth, we have yielded a good deal already, and have to fall back on the real actions of Jesus and his teachings, and not depend upon any prophecies made about him one thousand, seven hundred, five hundred, or three hundred years before he was born. One fact is worth a thousand theories; and I will take Jesus as I find him in the New Testament, and not touch the prophecies concerning Him.

9. "Then there is the 'Church of Rome.' I could pitch into that; but my congregation are a unit in thought on that subject, and all that I could say would only confirm them in their dislike to that Church. But I do wish my congregation had the strong and undoubting faith of the Catholic. There is something peculiarly attractive and strong in that Church; as much so as a Mohammedan has for his faith. Protestantism in its last analysis means doubt, investigation, research, and scepticism. To think is to doubt; and one can only

escape doubt by escaping thought. Give me thought and doubt rather than the dry rot of the brain. To stand still in thought is mental death. God intended conflict of thought, as He made men with different temperaments, different minds, and different aspirations. The Catholic believes too much; the Jews do not believe enough; and we Protestants are very much like the old Athenians in St. Paul's day, 'either telling or hearing some new thing.'

"Well, well, what shall I preach about to attract attention, and to give myself something of a reputation as a great light and an authority in the Church? The field is large, it is true, but the idea is to get upon some subject that will interest and attract the public mind, and to fill my church with new faces, and also fill the collection plates at the same time; for there is nothing like killing two birds with one stone; for 'the laborer is worthy of his hire.'

10. "Ah! I wonder how it would do to preach about 'Eternal Punishment'? That has been discussed, of course; but I might throw some light on that subject, and not give to God that fierce and unforgiving nature with which He is sometimes so vividly portrayed by some over-zealous ministers. There ought to be a softening of God's character as a Father, and the drawing of men to Him through the influence of love. But, really, I don't know how to go about it with certain verses in the Bible staring me full in the face, and there seems to be in human nature a sort of love for the very terrible, the wonderful and miraculous. Moses was an adept in that art. Jesus himself did not paint hell in any rose-tinted colors, and he made it the especial home

for rich men. Man is actuated, after all, more by his fears than his love; for one comes into or upon him, and the other goes out from him—that something which he gives to others. The fear of God comes in upon him—that something which he can easily realize and feel. His love he sends out from himself. Men fear law, they do not love it. Men fear both God and the Devil.

11. "There are 'Miracles.' I might show forth the power of God and Jesus in them; but that is an old subject, and the Bible is full of them—some pretty hard to believe in this day of scientific investigation and universal doubt. All that I could say to my congregation is—to believe them as told. To say, 'that God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform.' Have faith, much faith, more faith, and still a little more.

"Well, I am at a standstill. I do not know what line of thought to enlarge upon, and give myself play for originality. Here is my Bible before me, and yet I am at a loss to know what to preach upon so as to be an authority on some specific subject of theological thought. Let me see," taking up the Bible, "if I can get a subject or a new line of thought.

FOUND IT AT LAST.

"I have it! I have it! Here it is! The very thing to interest my congregation! Here I have miracle, mystery, the supernatural, the incomprehensible, the unaccountable, the inscrutable, and the past finding out! What a field for thought! How I can pour in hot shot upon his Devilship! He has no friends, and

whatever I may say about him, no matter how severe, will be believed. What a theme! Let me read.

“Matthew, chapter iv., verses 8, 9, 10: ‘Again, the Devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.’

“There, I have it! The character of the Devil! Who is he? Where did he come from? What are his intentions? What is his business on earth? What is his relationship to man? Where is he going? Where is his home? Why does God permit him to live and do evil? His extraordinary power to do evil, and why given him? Can he thwart God in His plans? Is he an enemy of God’s? Is he a liar, and if so, why so? Can he exercise an influence over mankind, and if so, why so? Does not God love the world? Can he counteract the good influences of God? if so, why so? Will he forever reign the Prince of evil?

“Great questions, wonderful questions, for thought! An unlimited field for theory, for facts, and for the personality of the Devil. If Gabriel could talk to Zacharias, and tell him he would be the father of John the Baptist, why not the Devil talk to Jesus or any other man when it suited his purposes? I can say what I please about the Devil, and no one will call into question my assertions. The Christian world is united on the issue as against the Devil, and he has no friends, and hence no defenders. I will take up the character of the Devil, and

I will make his fires hotter for him than they are, if I am able.

"He is a malignant spirit, and deserves to be handled with gloves off; and I intend to paint him before my congregation in colors true to his very nature. If I could only paint in words as vivid pictures as did Raphael, Rubens, Van Dyck, Poussin, and other great masters on canvas, what a sensation I would make! How my church would be filled Sunday after Sunday to hear my burning and eloquent words! My church would be the centre of attraction, and I the great preacher of the day. Glorious thought!

"Yes, the Devil shall be my theme, and I intend to make my hearers feel that he is in the Church, busy at work on them, and hearing me at the same time. If the 'Old Fellow' would only dare to show himself in his true nature and colors when I am paying my respects to him, I would make him wince under the lashing of my tongue—that 'Father of Liars.'

"I shall take for my text next Sunday the 'Temptation of Jesus' on the mountain. What wonderful mystery! How unnatural and supernatural the whole story reads! Yet it is true, and given us to teach the great lesson of the Devil's power, and his influence for evil when he chooses to exercise it. What mortal man could have withstood such a temptation? None but Jesus, upheld by divine power and His own pure spirit. Peter would have yielded in less than a five minutes' talk. St. Paul would no doubt have fallen; and as for the rest of poor mortals, they are not worth a thought under such surroundings."

Such was the outline of the thoughts which filled the

brain of the Rev. David Devine, D.D., as he sat in his study. He felt his importance, for he would be greeted and congratulated as Doctor. The college graduate, blushing with the first honor of his class, could feel no greater pleasure than did Rev. Dr. Devine.

CHAPTER II.

SUNDAY'S SERMON—THE DEVIL THE THEME.

SUNDAY came; all eyes were fixed on the new-made Doctor of Divinity. Everybody expected something extra in the way of a sermon. He took for his text, Matthew, chapter iv., and the first eleven verses. He said he intended to show up and illustrate the character and nature of the Devil in every respect. It was a great and important subject, and every one was interested in the nature and character of the Devil, for he was interested in the souls of all living. The whole world was interested in understanding the works of the Devil; not only that, but his great power and influence over the minds of the human race—that he knew no limit as to those whom he approached; that a king and a pauper were alike to him; that he was no respecter of persons; nor did intellect or ignorance influence his actions in the least. He had a supreme contempt for mankind at best, and knew every weak spot in the heart and nature of every individual. His eye was all-searching for the weak points in our character. He knew the character of every individual he approached. He did not approach all men and women in the same way, or with the same temptations, any more than men feed all animals upon the same kind of food.

“No one would think of offering a horse or cow, meat,

or a dog or cat, grass or grain. Some men are very much like hogs: they can be tempted with anything; they are noways nice about any temptation thrown in their way or offered. The Devil has no trouble with such; they are his without an effort on his part. But there are classes of minds who must be tempted with certain gifts if you would reach them effectually. No one would think of tempting the miser with ambition, or a display, or a love for glory. Money, money, is all that he wants; that, and nothing more. Money is his god, interest his faith, gain his creed, a full purse his church, and large possessions the only heaven he covets.

“To the man of ambition, thirsting for fame, notoriety, or influence, offer him office, or a place as a legislator, or some high position. To the man of low, sensual desires or appetites, offer him what Venus offered Paris to decide in her favor as the goddess of beauty, when Ate threw the apple of discord in the presence of Juno, Minerva, and Venus; or offer him high living and all carnal delights. To the man of reading, of intellectual delights, offer him books, rich and new with original thoughts. So on through the whole catalogue of human desires, inclinations, ambitions, gain, etc. Satan approached our Saviour with honor, glory, large possessions, and all earthly grandeur; but not having an omniscient mind, he erred in judgment as to the true character of our Lord, for he was not to be approached with such considerations. Had he come to Jesus as an humble suppliant, asking for mercy and forgiveness for past sins; had he come as a repentant rebel against God his Father; had he asked mercy of Him who was sent to save and forgive, we are unable rightly to conjecture what answer our Saviour

would have given him. He is such a liar, Jesus, no doubt, might have told him he was tempting Him with a pretence of repentance and penitence, and to go hence. Certainly, he would not have been rebuked as he was when our Saviour said, 'Get thee hence, Satan,' or 'Get thee behind me, Satan.'

"My brethren, be on your guard. The Devil knows all about the weak points of our natures, and how to reach our hearts in the most direct and successful way; the when, the how, the where, and the exact opportune time. When he sees you getting near a temptation, one that can and will attract your attention, desires, inclinations, or disposition, he is on the alert, and is whispering in your ear, through your desires, to do as your heart inclines. Beware, my dear hearers, beware! The Devil is close to you now, no doubt, if your heart is not purified by the divine grace of God. Resist him, and he will flee from you; but encourage him, and he will lock arms with, and march you into the temptation which you should resist. He will do it with a smiling face, polite ways, and laugh at your idea and fear of sin.

"My dear hearers, the Devil is a liar, a very great liar, the father of lies, and the truth is not in him. He is wonderfully and woefully economical with the truth. I may say he is full of truth, for none ever comes out of him; that is, if he knows what truth is. Oh, my dear hearers, shun every temptation of the Devil, no matter in what garb it may come! He can quote scripture as fluently as any minister, and he can torture and twist it to mean just anything to suit his evil ends. He is very far superior to the best legal talent of the country, when well paid, to twist legal principles out of their

true meaning and intentions. Yea, more, he is like some divines who stretch, torture, twist, and garble passages from this Holy Book before me, to build up some sect, creed, or dogma. To have, as they say, a new church with all the truth in it. God forbid that I should ever do such a thing!

A mere outline is given of Dr. Devine's sermon. He told his hearers that he would deliver several sermons on the Devil, or Satan, as he is called in the Bible. He would show up his character from the day he entered the Garden of Eden and deceived our first parents, to the day of his final condemnation and the destruction of the world as told in Revelation.

For some four sabbaths the Rev. Dr. Devine delivered his theological philippics against the Devil. The Doctor did blacken his character well, and to the full satisfaction of his hearers, especially those who thought they stood in no immediate danger of his visits. Others he made feel a little uneasy; the reason, they knew why. Conscience does a good deal of private talk, very low and still, but the still small voice is heard. The Devil was hideous enough in thought, form, and shape, from the Doctor's word painting.

CHAPTER III.

THE DEVIL PAYS THE DOCTOR A VISIT—THE DOCTOR TAKEN
BY SURPRISE.

ON a Wednesday evening, after supper, the Rev. Dr. Devine was sitting in his study, a very pleasant room, enjoying a cigar, and thinking over in his mind the next Sunday's sermon. "I have dwelt upon the Devil in my last four sermons, and I will in this sermon take up his final punishment, the end of the world, and the end of his influence for evil. I will endeavor to show my hearers what will be the fate of those who die out of Christ; where they will live, how they will live, and who will be their great associate. I will picture the terrors of an eternal hell—no hades or sheol with me; hell is the word—and an eternal fire in an eternal hell. The Devil I have shown up pretty well. I guess my hearers know something about him and his character by this time, and I wish to warn them of that fire which——"

Just then the Doctor heard a gentle cough, and, looking to see who it was, saw an individual sitting in a chair near him, rather plain in appearance and dress, but very self-composed, a smile playing about his lips. The Doctor was a little taken aback at his visitor, and said in a very commanding way:

"Who are you, sir? How come you in my study without knocking? What do you want?"

"I came," said the individual, "to have a talk with you; the Rev. David Devine, D.D., I believe I am addressing."

"That is my name, sir," answered the Doctor, "but I have not the pleasure or honor of your acquaintance."

"You ought to know me," said the individual, "for you seem to be very familiar with my history, nature, character, and doings in the world."

"Never saw you before; know nothing about you or your history. Don't know that I am at all interested in you," said the Doctor with some warmth in his speech.

"You are mistaken, Doctor," said the individual. "You are far more interested in me than I am in you. You give all your thoughts to me."

The Doctor thought he had a lunatic in his room, and thought it best to be gentle with him until he could get some one else in the room, and started to rise.

"Keep your seat, Doctor Devine," said the individual. "I came for a friendly talk with you, as you have been talking about me so much of late, especially in your Sunday sermons."

"My friend," said the Doctor, "you are mistaken in your man and the house you are in. I have not said a word about you."

The Devil smiled a most pleasant smile, and said: "Doctor, I never make mistakes; it is you who make mistakes."

"My friend, please tell me who are, and what you want," said the Doctor.

"Well, Doctor Devine," said the individual, "I am the DEVIL." And in an instant the Devil put on the

grandeur of his person, the majesty of his looks, and the magnetism of his nature. There was something grand, imposing, commanding, and seductive in his appearance. He had all the graces of an accomplished gentleman, with an air of one born to command. As a fallen angel he had lost the brightness of his countenance, but not his personal looks.

The Rev. Dr. Devine was lost in amazement, surprise, and greatly agitated, nervous, and somewhat alarmed at the looks of his visitor, for he had never before looked upon such a face—a face grand, handsome, but not malignant.

The Doctor stammered out, “to please excuse him; he had an engagement.”

“Keep your seat, Doctor; I have an engagement with you. I have called to have a friendly social chat. I do not intend to do you any personal harm. That is not my character. I have come to talk with you about myself, and to see if you might not be laboring under a kind of mental hallucination in regard to who I am, why I am, and what is my business on earth. Do I look as black as you have painted me? Do I look frightful and repulsive?”

“No, you do not,” stammered out the Doctor. “I did not think you were such a looking being.”

“Precisely,” said the Devil. “And that is the way with you mortals; drawing false conclusions about things of which you know little, and really can know but little in this world.”

“Well, if I had seen you before I began my ser——” replied the Doctor.

“Just so,” said the Devil. “You mortals are very

superficial thinkers; for you cannot think but a few hours or days on any subject before you are ready to 'take sides,' to be sectarians, partisans, an espouser, a follower, or something which leads your thoughts into a narrow channel of thinking."

"You will please," said the Doctor, "ex——"

"Do not be at all embarrassed," said the Devil, "at my presence. My visit is entirely social and friendly; nor do I mean any personal or spiritual harm to yourself. I am here to have a fair, friendly, and free talk with you. I will place myself on perfect terms of equality with you, and talk with you as man to man. Do not see in me, in our arguments or talks, the 'Spirit of Evil,' 'The Fallen Archangel,' 'The Great Tempter,' 'The Enemy of God,' 'The Mighty Satan,' 'The Ever Present Devil.' Banish such ideas, and let us have a fair and square argument on the premises you have assumed as to my nature and character—who I am, what I am, and what are my intentions towards man."

"You talk very fair," said the Doctor.

"I am a fair man, if you will allow me such an expression in our conversation; and just think of me as a man, not as a supernatural spirit of evil. Think of me just as those who followed the 'Son of Man,' as he called Himself, thought and talked to Him as a man, and treated Him as a man, and in the great hour of His trial deserted Him as a man," replied the Devil.

"You do not mean to say," asked the Doctor, "that the disciples of Jesus thought Him to be a man like themselves, only superior in intelligence to them, do you?"

“Certainly ; that, and nothing more,” replied the Devil.

“You astonish me,” said the Doctor. “They certainly thought Him divine.”

“I will astonish you about a good many things you mortals think about me, about God, and about Jesus,” answered the Devil.

“You say that the disciples thought Jesus only a man like themselves, except that they recognized in Him something of a prophet, as He called Himself the ‘Son of Man’?”

“You have it exactly,” replied the Devil. “They looked upon Him in the same light as did the Jews of the days of Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and a host of other prophets were looked upon, called ‘Son or Sons of Man’—an Oriental expression for prophet, as you know. Jesus charged the Jews in his day as being the children of them which killed the prophets. They looked upon Him as only a great prophet to redeem Israel ; that, and nothing more. You seem to be ignorant of Oriental thought and expression.”

“You astonish me by such bold assertions,” remarked the Doctor.

“You should not be astonished,” replied the Devil. “You are talking and reading of the character of Jesus as you find it to-day in your Bible. There was no Bible of Him for His disciples to read, and it is certain that His disciples did not understand His teachings about Himself, if you take the story of His resurrection. Think a moment, Doctor.”

“Think what?” asked the Doctor.

“Why, think if those who followed Jesus imagined

that He, who throughout His conversation spoke of Himself as one whom God had sent, who in their presence prayed to God, was Himself the Almighty. Did they believe that it was the Eternal God, the Maker of heaven and earth, whom they deserted and denied upon His arrest, or that the Almighty God could have been arrested, tried, condemned, and executed by mortal man, the creatures of His hands? Would you have been so cowardly, had you so believed? Was Jesus so dark, ambiguous, delphic, and esoteric in His teachings as not to be understood, or did He try to mislead and deceive?"

"Well, well, I—" the Doctor was going to say.

"Stop with your wells," put in the Devil. "You see Jesus as he is now presented to you through a Bible written long after his death. Put yourself in the place of his disciples, and what would you have done when you saw the Almighty God arrested? Would you have believed Him to be the Almighty God whom you now preach? How easy a thing it is to be very wise about a man, an action, a deed, after one has passed away, and time developed the fruits of an action!"

"Well, you know," said the Doctor, "that the great plan of salvation had to be worked out through the death of our Saviour, and——"

"Stop there!" exclaimed the Devil. "I have not come here to discuss with you the plan of man's salvation; that is altogether another subject. I have come to discuss my nature and character as you have depicted me before your congregation. But it is about your bed time, and I will not keep you up later to-night, as I see that you are somewhat excited, and have been taken by

surprise at my unlooked-for and social visit. I bid you a pleasant good night, and will see you again."

In the twinkling of an eye the Devil disappeared, the Doctor knew not how. There was a slight smell of sulphur in the room when he left.

CHAPTER IV.

REV. DR. DEVINE'S REFLECTIONS—HIS VISITORS—THEIR
ASTONISHMENT AT HIS TALK.

"WELL! well! Did mortal man ever have such a visit before from the Devil? He was the Devil in truth, and I have seen him. What does God intend by permitting him to visit me? I am glad he is gone, for I am all in a perspiration, and, as he very truly remarked, I am excited, and was never more taken by surprise in my life. He is no ordinary being or spirit, that is certain; and if he gets me into a discussion with himself, I do not know where it will end, or what will be the final result.

"Any thing, any assertion, any position, can pass for truth, so long as it is not called into question or disputed. The old religions of Egypt, Greece, and Rome died because they were disputed, and the priests were called upon to prove them, and could not. It is the questioning of a truth that either kills it, or develops it into a fact; for all facts are truths. A fact is that which can be proven and cannot be denied. It is self-evident to the senses, the mind, the reason, or the eye.

"I have seen the Devil to-night, and know that he really exists; for I have talked with him, and he has put me to very serious thinking. I have got beyond a

theory or a surmise, for I must grapple with facts. If there is a God, there must be a Devil; if there are rewards, there must be punishments; if there is a heaven, there must be a hell; if there is a 'here,' there must be a 'there.'

"If the Devil pays me another visit—but I hope he will not—I will have to play listener more than logician. His eyes declare a wonderfully active brain; his manner is conscious self-possession; his looks a very argument in his favor, and his knowledge coextensive with creation. I will call my wife in, and tell her what I have seen;" and going into the parlor, he found Mr. and Mrs. Grace talking with his wife. He gave them a cordial greeting, but they saw he was somewhat excited, and had a sort of far-away look in his eyes. His wife said pleasantly to him: "Who was that you had in your study? I heard you talking, or some one talking to you, and for that reason did not tell you that Mr. and Mrs. Grace had called to see us."

"Well, I don't know exactly how to answer that question so that you would believe me," replied the Doctor.

"No secret of yours, I hope, that I am intruding upon," said his wife. "I thought it might be something about church affairs."

"It was something about my preaching," replied the Doctor with a peculiar look, "and rather serious at that. He took exceptions to my sermons."

"Nothing alarming," put in Mrs. Grace and Mrs. Devine. "Is it about the debt of the church? We will be able to raise that in a year or two, I think."

"Nothing about money matters," replied the Doctor, with a forced smile.

"So glad to hear it," put in both the ladies. "Who did you have for a visitor, if we are permitted to ask?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, a most remarkable visitor; and no one but the very Devil himself," answered the Doctor with great seriousness in his looks and expression.

The ladies exclaimed, "O Doctor! O Doctor! How can you talk that way or say that?"

"I do say it," said the Doctor, looking still more serious; "and have been promised another visit from him."

"Goodness gracious, Doctor! Please do not joke with us on such a serious matter as that. Martin Luther said he saw the Devil, and threw his inkstand at him; but who believes such a story? And you are telling us the same story, with the inkstand left out."

"No joke, I can assure you," replied the Doctor, "but an actual fact. I have been talking with him, and about our Saviour."

The ladies looked at each other in blank astonishment. Mrs. Devine was thinking the Doctor had lost his mind, and she looked as if she was about ready to cry.

"Pray, Doctor," said Mrs. Devine, "don't talk that way; one would think you were taking leave of your senses."

Mr. Grace sat quietly by, smiling at the supposed assumed air of the Doctor, and thought he was playing off a little dry, but rather unministerial, humor. The Doctor looked at Mr. Grace, and said:

"Strange things happen in this world, and Shakespeare was about right when he said:

'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.'

Mr. Grace began to think the Doctor a little off in his "upper story," but said: "Yes, Doctor, the Devil is generally about everywhere. You have told us all about him for the last four Sundays."

"Yes, yes," replied the Doctor; "and it was for that very reason he came to my study this evening to have a talk with me about himself. And he came in the form of a man, just as he did two thousand years ago; no doubt just as he appeared to our Saviour on the mountain, who was then Himself in human form. There must be something of equality of natures for communication. You know that when Moses stood in the divine presence on Mount Sinai, he partook of some of the brightness of God, and had to put a veil over his face, for it was bright with the brightness reflected from the presence of Jehovah; and there was also an inward reflection upon his mind which gave to him superior mental brightness over Aaron and all others."

"I see," remarked Mr. Grace; "but, really, do you seriously intend to say that the Devil came to you in person, and had a conversation with you? Though Mrs. Devine says she heard some one talking with you in your study."

"I mean just what I say," answered the Doctor; "and perhaps you may see him some of these days in human shape."

"I don't wish to see him in any shape," replied Mr. Grace, with some little feeling in his expression.

In a short time Mr. and Mrs. Grace took leave, and, as they walked home, Mr. Grace said very seriously: "The Doctor has preached so much about the Devil of late, that he really thinks he has seen him. It is a dangerous

thing to dwell too long on a given subject, for the mind begins to see visions, it runs into vagaries, and the next thing there is insanity from an overworked brain; then the lunatic asylum."

"Yes, that is so," replied Mrs. Grace; "for I have known men to dwell so much upon money making, and the value of a dollar, that their families were almost reduced to starvation, for want of the common comforts of life. There is Mr. Plutman; did he ever come to our house but that his whole talk was per cent. upon his investments? He is always finding fault with his wife if she asks for a little donation for the church, and he is so miserably stingy that he never goes to church, for fear he will have to contribute a few cents. It is dangerous to dwell too much on one subject."

"What are you talking about?" asked Mr. Grace. "What has that to do with Dr. Devine's talk with the Devil to-night?"

"Oh, nothing!" said Mrs. Grace. "It only struck me that when the mind dwells too much on any subject, one becomes sort of cranky, one-ideaed, and is convinced that he is right, and everybody else who does not believe as he does, is wrong, unorthodox, bigoted, or a fool."

"Well, what has that to do with the Doctor's assertion? Don't you think he was a little wild in his talk? I do, and am tired of hearing about the Devil; and I do hope the Devil will persuade him to change the subject of his Sunday sermons. I want to hear more about Jesus and less about the Devil," said Mr. Grace.

"Do you think he saw the Devil?" asked Mrs. Grace.

"Yes, according to his own statement," replied Mr.

Grace ; "and I hope some good, in some way, will come from the visit."

"You may rest assured of the fact," said Mrs. Grace, "if he has seen him, good or evil will certainly come from it."

"I hope so, to say the least," said Mr. Grace.

CHAPTER V.

THE DEVIL'S SECOND VISIT—HE INTERPRETS THE BIBLE—
THE DOCTOR ENLIGHTENED.

THE Rev. Dr. Devine was sitting in his study on Thursday evening, in rather an anxious state of mind. He had told his wife that he did not know whether he would have a visit from the Devil or not; and as she was rather skeptical about such visits, if she should hear any talking in the study, to come in and see for herself. He had requested Mr. and Mrs. Grace not to say anything about their conversation at the house, and they had promised to be silent on the subject. "But should you hear conversation in the study, just step in as if by accident."

"Goodness me!" exclaimed Mrs. Devine, "I should faint if I saw the Devil! I should be so scared that I should drop in my tracks."

The Doctor had just lit his second cigar, when he thought some one touched him on the shoulder, and looking in a chair near where he sat, there he saw the Devil with a pleasant smile on his wonderfully handsome face, sitting at his ease.

"Good evening," bowed the Devil. "As you were expecting me, I thought I would not disappoint you."

The Doctor felt the perspiration bursting from every pore, and his hair felt as if it was about to take its depart-

ure from his head. But he managed to return the salutation, and said: "Take a seat—excuse me, be seated—I mean—I mean, good evening."

"Well, Doctor," said the Devil, "I have come to have a fair and free argument with you as regards my nature and character, and my doings and actions among mankind, and to see if you will not modify your views about me, when you come to know me better, and hear me in my own defence. I am enough of a lawyer to take care of myself. Do not be afraid that I will be offended at anything you may say, or what you may call me. I am so accustomed to abuse by you mortals, that I am used to it, expect it, am indifferent to it, and more often smile than otherwise. Your sermons afforded me no little interest and pleasure. You were earnest, honest, and ignorant in your zeal; and that is the reason you mortals are so intolerant of each other when you differ on theological questions. Read the history of your religious wars and persecutions, and if you have not made hell on earth, there is no hell for you mortals when you take on your spiritual natures."

"Well, I certainly did not intend to misrepresent you," replied the Doctor; "and I find all my authority here in this Bible for what I have said about you."

"That is your strongest argument, I well know," replied the Devil. "You can prove almost anything from that Book, by putting on your own interpretations. You have not an Eastern mind, and hence you have not Eastern thoughts of expression. The Jews of Palestine were neither Englishmen nor Americans, and they did not have your peculiar order or build of mind."

"What has that to do with the inspired Word of

God?" asked the Doctor. "Inspiration knows nothing of habits of thought. God speaks in but one language to all the world, and all understand Him."

"There you make a simple assertion, and are very much mistaken. He speaks in many languages and through many orders of minds, and to no two different peoples alike; or, to be more correct, to two different races alike," replied the Devil.

"Can you prove that from this Book?" asked the Doctor.

"I think I can from that Book you have in your hand," replied the Devil.

"Please give me an illustration," asked the Doctor.

"What do you think of God?" asked the Devil.

"Why, he is the God of the universe; the Father of us all; the Governor of the world; The Supreme Intelligence; The First Cause. He is Love. Yet incomprehensible and past finding out. All Wisdom, all Truth. Will that suit you for an answer?" asked the Doctor.

"Very good indeed," replied the Devil; "and as you have read your Bible carefully, I will give you the Jewish idea of God, or Jehovah, and then I will show you what the Jews thought of me."

"Would be pleased to hear you on that point," said the Doctor.

"Well, the Jews called their God, now your God, Jehovah, I Am, Ishi, Lord, God. Represented by fire, by light, by darkness and clouds. Compared Him to animals—the unicorn, lion; as birds flying; as a bear, a moth, a leopard. God appeared to them in human form; had voice, hands, feet, face, eyes, nostrils, a thorough man

to them. He laughs, sleeps, is a warrior, is grieved, is jealous, is angry, is hating, taking vengeance, makes oaths, repents, and changes His purposes, deterred from His purpose, and, in fact, is made everything and anything to please their purposes. And if you had lived in the days of the prophets you would——”

“Please stop a moment,” put in the Doctor. “You see the Jew was full of the figure of speech, and——”

“Stop, if you please,” interrupted the Devil. “Your figure of speech, as you call it, is eminently an Eastern production, and shows you at once that, when you try to explain your figure of speech, you will run into absurdities and contradictions. The Eastern Jew has not your mind, nor have you the Jew’s mind of two and three thousand years ago.”

“But you know that God so spoke to the prophets of old,” said the Doctor, “that they wrote as the Spirit moved them.”

“Will you please tell me how they knew what that Spirit was, if they did not hear or see something? I know you feel inspired in the pulpit sometimes, when you have not a written sermon before you. What you ardently wish for, desire or believe, you give utterance to. But would you go into court and positively swear that God had spoken to you in the pulpit?” asked the Devil.

“No. I don’t know that I would,” answered the Doctor.

“Precisely,” said the Devil; “and therein is where you and the old Jew of three thousand years ago differ widely. For he would go into court, and swear, with all the earnestness of his peculiar nature and education, that

Jehovah did speak to him in what he said. He had no doubts, but you have many."

"Well, you see that times have changed since those days," answered the Doctor.

"Very much indeed," replied the Devil, "for they have changed from ignorance to intelligence; from superstition to reason; from supernatural causes to natural causes; from miracle to mental investigation. The sun no more stands still at the command of man; the waters are no more divided by command; the dead are not raised by touching a certain dead man's bones; or by disciples, or——"

"Please stop a minute," asked the Doctor. "You know that those were the days of miracles, and——"

"Stop, Doctor," said the Devil. "You are getting into very deep water for a mortal. A miracle is that for which there is no law; it is outside of all law; there is no reason for it. It simply begins with and ends with God. Don't try to explain a miracle. Believe in them if you will, but don't try to explain them by any law known to mortals."

"You deny miracles, then, do you?" asked the Doctor.

"As you understand them, I most emphatically do," replied the Devil. "But my visit is not to discuss miracles, plans of salvation, or any theological questions outside of myself. I am here to discuss and defend myself against your charges as to my nature and character."

"I am glad that you have dismissed miracles," said the Doctor. "For it has been a stumbling block to a great many honest and intelligent minds, and has done no little harm in the Church."

"A great deal, if you but knew it," replied the Devil.

"Well, let me hear what the old Jew thought of you, as he had his idea about God ; or, rather, his idea about you," said the Doctor.

"To begin with," said the Devil, "the Jew of old had plenty of names for me. Hear them. The Serpent, the Old Serpent, the Great Red Dragon, the Accuser of the Brethren, the Enemy, Satan, Belial, Beelzebub, Mammon, the Angel of Light, the Angel of the Bottomless Pit, the Prince of the Power of the Air, Lucifer, Abaddon or Apollyon, Legion, the God of this World, the Foul Spirit, the Lying Spirit, the Unclean Spirit, the Tempter, the Son of the Morning, and, to sum them all up, I am called in the New Testament, more than by any other name, the Devil. Now you have my many names ; and you see the old Jew was fond of giving many names not only to his God, but also to me. You must understand the idioms of a people, to understand their peculiar expressions, their worship, their faith, and belief."

"That is plausible enough, and stands to reason," replied the Doctor.

"Plausible !" exclaimed the Devil, "that is not the word. It is a truth, the corner stone of reason, and the essence of sound thought. The culture and cult of a people is the index to their minds, feelings, and habits of thought and modes of expression."

"So you think," said the Doctor, "that we must go back of language to get at the real meaning and ideas of a people?"

"Certainly," replied the Devil. "There is an old and true saying among you mortals, that 'actions speak

louder than words;’ and you must study actions to interpret thought or motives. I study and read the human race from a far different standpoint from you. You mortals are a study to me. Would you believe it? I am learning something new every day from you mortals. Yet I know a great deal; am very far from being ignorant. I understand mankind, but you do not. I understand and comprehend God better than you; though there are some of your profession who, when in the pulpit, would lead one to believe that they are the especial and confidential secretaries of the Almighty, and thoroughly understand the divine mind as to all His intentions. I have but one office, one duty, and one performance; and that is to obey the orders given me by the Ruler and Judge of this world. I but execute God’s commands, and for that reason I exist; for that purpose I walk the earth.”

“Some ministers are given to making pretty broad assertions in the pulpit,” remarked the Doctor.

“A good many,” answered the Devil. “For they assume the office of both priest, prophet, and special messenger of God; and like the prophets of old, who gave out that they spoke by direct command and positive authority from Jehovah, they must be heard and obeyed accordingly. What a tremendous power over you mortals was exercised in the expression: ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ Soul, body, and mind were at once and at the same time enslaved by prophets and priests. And to-day, in your boasted enlightened age, I find the same controlling influences exercised. What fools you mortals are!”

“Well, you know,” said the Doctor, “that the prophets were——”

“Stop right there,” interrupted the Devil. “I have not come to discuss the prophets with you ; but, as it is late, I bid you a pleasant good evening, and will see you on next Monday evening, after your Sunday’s sermon.” With that, the Doctor felt a breath of air pass his face, and the Devil was gone.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DOCTOR'S SUNDAY SERMON—WHAT MR. AND MRS. GRACE
THOUGHT OF IT.

"WELL, well," exclaimed the Doctor, "his visits are remarkable, and he comes and goes at will. I am satisfied he is the Devil; the same one who was so conspicuous in the days of our Saviour. He does walk about, but not exactly as a roaring lion. As he told God in Job, he is 'going to and fro in the earth.' There is no question as to his great ability, nor does he for a moment doubt himself. Really great men never doubt themselves, though they may be modest in demeanor.

"I will not preach about him on Sunday, but give my congregation a rest. I will give them a sermon on 'Faith,' for that is an unanswerable argument to all reason or doubts; to all facts, no matter how fortified by sound logic, or even history. Faith laughs at facts, history, and common sense when they clash. Yes, faith—faith—such as can move mountains, move men to wonderful performances. I will preach on Sunday on faith. What would a Christian be without faith? The Jew has faith; the Mohammedan has faith; and what a driving-wheel in their lives! St. Paul is a present help at all times, and under all circumstances, to a minister. The more ignorant the minister, the stronger his faith;

and he has but one argument for the most learned man—faith—faith. It is a very Hercules club in a very weak arm, and it answers its purposes.

“Here is my text: Heb. xi. 1: ‘Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.’ How I thank the author of Hebrews for that blessed definition!”

So on the next Sunday the Doctor treated his congregation to the importance of having undying faith in God, in Jesus Christ, in the Holy Ghost, and the teachings of the Bible as the inspired word of God. “Faith,” said the Doctor, “may be called a substance, and a substance is that which we can see and take hold on. Substance is something material, like ourselves. Mental faith is a mental substance. Faith, belief, and hope are so much alike, like triplets in a family, that even the mother finds it difficult to distinguish the children. Only a scholar, a definer of words, can draw clearly the distinction. Like the word ‘LOVE,’ it is used for all sorts of feelings, things, and desires. For a common illustration, let us take the voyage of Columbus in 1492, in a search for an eastern passage by going west. He had a strong faith, hope, or belief, that the passage could be made. He would not listen to the doubts of the sailors, but, with his eyes fixed westward, he sailed on and on, regardless of discontent and murmurs. It was his faith that nerved his heart, and, when at last he saw land, his faith partook of a kind of substance; it was substance in the realization of his hopes. Our old patriotic fathers of 1776 had faith in the righteousness of their cause. They had a strong faith in God, and believed He was for the right. They had a faith equal to the Jew of old. So strong,

that it gave expression to itself in the substance of the Declaration of Independence. Oliver Cromwell had a very strong faith, and, at the same time, a very practical one, when he told his soldiers to 'have faith in God, but keep their powder dry.' Fine illustrations of faith and works coöperating together! We need just such faith in our every-day life.

"Job was a beautiful illustration of faith, and it would be well for you, my dear hearers, when you feel like doubting God, to read Job, learn of him, feel like him, and praise God as he did under his sore trials. Do not forget the instructive writings of St. Paul, a man of much faith, wonderful faith, a kind of supernatural faith; you cannot, my dear hearers, ever expect to approach him in that respect. Our Saviour was the very embodiment of all faith, and taught it to his disciples, not only in words, but in His doings, and His submission unto death on the cross."

We cannot follow the Doctor through his learned and able argument on the necessity of a living, active, and doing faith. His hearers were pleased to hear something else than the terrible doings of the Devil.

As Mr. Grace left the church, he was heard to say: "I hope he has done him good by his visit, and we will have a rest on 'Old Nick.'"

"I don't know so much about that," remarked his wife; "for as the Doctor was earnest in enforcing upon our minds faith and trust in God, he may endeavor to impress upon our minds to have faith in the Devil, and, having faith in him, to fear him. We do more through fear than we do through love. It is the eyes and tongues

of others we fear, more than those of God or the Devil, who control our actions."

"What are you talking about?" asked Mr. Grace. "Do you intend to put God and the Devil on the same footing?"

"No, not exactly that," replied Mrs. Grace; "but there seems to be a kind of copartnership between the two which I do not exactly understand."

"What in the name of common sense are you talking about?" asked Mr. Grace with some surprise. "Are you an infidel, or what have you been reading?"

"Infidel! No, indeed!" replied Mrs. Grace with emphasis. "I have only been reading my Bible, and there are some things in it I do not exactly comprehend or understand."

"And do you ever expect to understand them as long as you live?" asked Mr. Grace.

"I don't see the reason why I should not," answered Mrs. Grace. "St. Paul seemed to understand them, and he wrote enough, certainly, to try to make others understand them. What is the use of writing or preaching unless it is to make all things clear?"

"What are you talking about?" put in Mr. Grace. "St. Paul was inspired; and do you expect to understand an inspired man?"

"I don't see the reason why I should not," quietly answered Mrs. Grace. "Moses was inspired, and he was plain enough; for the Jews understood him, though they did not obey him as readily as he desired. Why, I told Tom, the other day, that I did not want him to go on the strawberry-bed and eat the berries; yet he went on and picked the very best and the nicest that I had my

eye upon to send to Mrs. Devine. Did he not understand me? I gave him a good switching, and that was all I could do."

"What are you talking about?" put in Mr. Grace.

"I am talking about understanding and obeying," replied Mrs. Grace. "I do not believe that God intends for us to go through life like little children; for what did he give us reason and minds for, but to think, to investigate, and then act? I do not expect to be saved through miracle, mystery, or theology; but through good works, faith in God, and purity of heart. That is my creed."

"And yet you believe that God and the Devil are in some sort of copartnership in the government of this world, if I understand you," said Mr. Grace.

"Something like that, but I cannot exactly explain it; but it will be some of these days, I believe," said Mrs. Grace.

"I believe you are getting a little skeptical in your religious belief. I hope you are not reading any of the skeptical works of the present day," said Mr. Grace.

"No, nothing but my Bible," said Mrs. Grace; "and I am trying to understand that to the best of my ability."

"Well, I just tell you," said Mr. Grace, "you will never understand it, and it is a waste of time to try. Look at all of the creeds and dogmas that are built upon the words of the sacred writers."

"Our Saviour tells us in Matt. xxv. 15: 'And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one.' I purpose to use those He has given me to the best of my ability," said Mrs. Grace.

"Well, you have not the five, or hardly the two," remarked Mr. Grace; "and you will not make much

progress in attempting to understand the mysteries of the Bible."

"You are quite complimentary," said Mrs. Grace, with some little feeling. "I hardly think you would have told me that when you were courting me. Your letters to me spoke quite a different opinion as to my ability."

"What in the world are you talking about?" asked Mr. Grace.

"Well, let us drop the subject," said Mrs. Grace; "for we are at home, and I must see about dinner."

"That is a sensible wife of mine," said Mr. Grace to himself, "but it won't do to tell her so. Women are strange creatures."

CHAPTER VII.

THE DEVIL'S THIRD VISIT—QUESTIONS, SHORT, SHARP,
AND TO THE POINT—JOB CONSIDERED.

"WELL," said the Doctor, as he was sitting in his study on Monday evening, expecting the Devil, "I did not give my congregation the Devil in my sermon of yesterday, and I think it was a sort of relief to them. I saw they looked relieved as soon as I took my text. But if they could see the Devil as I have seen him, and hear him talk, I wonder what they would think of him? They would be convinced of one fact, that there is such a being; but a far different looking one from their present conception of him.

"I have been seriously debating in my mind if I should not tell my congregation of my talks with——"

Just then the Doctor thought he heard some one say, "Good evening;" and, looking in a chair near him, there sat the Devil, dressed in a fine suit of black, and looking every inch like a bishop or a D.D., with his usual pleasant smile.

"You see," said the Devil, "I am looking something like a divine, though I have never been admitted to the ministry, but I am something of a divine by my own volition; and I am pretty well posted in the Scriptures. I knew all the writers very well."

"You are very prompt in your appointment," said the Doctor, as soon as his surprise passed off and he felt at ease.

"Yes," said the Devil, "nothing like honoring your appointments. It is a fine index of character. You have read of the three friends of Job who made an appointment to come and mourn with and comfort him. But it is the prevailing and general idea that they proved to be very poor comforters; rather, on the other hand, pretty sharp accusers. But good came of the whole affair from beginning to end."

"I thank you for mentioning Job," said the Doctor, "for I want to ask you several questions about your proceedings and dealings with him."

"Proceed," said the Devil, "and I will endeavor to give you all the light I can, so far as I am personally concerned. I have nothing to hide or keep back."

"Thank you," said the Doctor, "for I want to know what you were doing among the 'Sons of God'?"

"Doing!" exclaimed the Devil. "Why, attending to my every-day business! Who were the 'Sons of God,' if I may put that question to you?"

"Why, they were the Sons of God, I presume," answered the Doctor. "Very holy men; maybe inferior angels, for what I know."

"Sons of God!" exclaimed the Devil. "Why, they were the Jews, who called themselves the Sons of God, as you should know. Did not Jesus call Himself the Son of God? And when the Jews picked up stones to stone Him, did He not explain to them what He meant, and that He did not blaspheme? They were satisfied with

His explanation, and threw down the stones. Read Exod. iv. 22: 'And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn.' Again, Hos. i. 10: 'Ye are the sons of the living God.' Again, Ps. lxxxii. 6: 'I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High.' Again, Phil. ii. 15: 'That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.' And in Rev. xxi. 7: 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.' Jesus is an illustration. And when you read in Gen. vi. 2: 'That the sons of God saw the daughters of men [Gentiles] that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose,' you should bear in mind that the Jews in their Bible were speaking of themselves. They had a wonderfully good opinion of themselves, and were the noted egotists of the world. They were a peculiar people, and got thrashed many times by other nations on account of their superciliousness. The Jewish Bible is but the education and reflection of the Jewish mind."

"So you were among the Jews then?" asked the Doctor. "I will not discuss the position which you have taken with so much skill."

"Certainly," replied the Devil, "and have been among them to this day, and the rest of mankind, yourself not excepted. As to not discussing my assertions or position, you are wise in not doing so."

"Thank you for the compliment implied," smiled the Doctor; "but I am trying to find out something about yourself."

"Proceed," said the Devil. "Ask any questions you please; do not regard my feelings."

"Well, was Job a Jew?" asked the Doctor.

"He was to all intents and purposes," answered the Devil; "for the Jews claim that they were the descendants of Shem, and those that lived in the land of Uz were the grandchildren of Shem, from whom the Jews descended. As Abraham was a grandson of Shem, the same as Job, as you will see in the Bible, by reading the genealogical table, Shem was the trunk, and Job, Abraham, and other tribes were the limbs.

"I understand," said the Doctor. "And why did you afflict Job as you did? Had he done you any wrong?"

"A strange question, indeed, for a D.D. to ask me," replied the Devil. "No Man ever did me a wrong, except by ignorantly misrepresenting me, and for that I bear him no malice."

"Why so?" asked the Doctor.

"I had nothing against Job; never gave the mortal a thought. I bore him no hatred or malice. He had done me no wrong. I was not particularly interested in him," answered the Devil.

"Then why did you afflict him?" asked the Doctor; "for you certainly did, and that terribly."

"Certainly I did," replied the Devil; "and I did it because I was told to do it. I had my opinions, yea, convictions, about you mortals; and when my attention was called directly to Job by the Almighty, and presented to me as a model man, an extra righteous man, I gave the only reply to the Almighty that I possibly could, and which I believed."

"Then God afflicted Job, did he?" asked the Doctor.

“Certainly; I was used as a mere tool in the hands of the Almighty, and Job so recognized it, though he knew nothing of the conversation between the Almighty and myself,” answered the Devil.

“How so?” asked the Doctor. “I do not exactly comprehend you.”

“Hand me your Bible, for I can read as well as argue,” said the Devil. “Listen! They call me Satan, instead of Devil, in the Old Testament, for in the New Testament I am a very active Devil. Hear Job i. 8-11:

“‘And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?’

“‘Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?’

“‘Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

“‘But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.’ You see in Job, chapter ii., verses 2, 3, 4, 5, what the Lord said to me, and my reply, like unto the first as above read. In verse 6 I read: ‘And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.’ God did not Himself afflict Job. I told Him to put forth His hand, but the Almighty told me to do it. I was but a simple tool used by God to test the integrity of Job. Did I commit any crime by obeying the Lord? Did He not use me for a purpose? How would it have sounded for me to have said to the Almighty: ‘If you

take so much stock in your man Job, bank on him so heavily, try him yourself. Don't ask me to do such work, if you please; I have no interest in your man Job. I know my business'?"

"That is true as far as it goes," said the Doctor.

"As far as it goes, you say," remarked the Devil. "I shall now put to you a few leading questions, and I want you to answer them in a short, positive, and categorical way."

"Proceed," said the Doctor.

"Can God do wrong?" asked the Devil.

"Certainly not," answered the Doctor.

"Are not all His plans and intentions in the government of the world for the best?" asked the Devil.

"Certainly," replied the Doctor.

"Can anything happen independent of, or outside of, Him?" asked the Devil.

"Certainly not," answered the Doctor.

"Has not God the interest and the good of man, His creature, in His own keeping?" asked the Devil.

"Certainly he has," replied the Doctor.

"Would He afflict man in any way, except for his own special good?" asked the Devil.

"Certainly He would not," answered the Doctor.

"Is not God all wise, all just, all good, all merciful, all love? Was not His love for the world through Jesus wonderful?"

"Certainly. He is all that, blessed be His name," replied the Doctor.

"Can any being, angel, thing, or mortal man, thwart the plans of God?" asked the Devil.

"Certainly not," replied the Doctor.

"Does not God work by means for the ultimate good of all mankind, and does He not desire that all mortals should love and fear Him? Job feared him."

"Certainly He does," replied the Doctor.

"Does God desire that any should go to hell, since He so loved the world as to send His only begotten Son to die for you mortals and to save all?" asked the Devil.

"Certainly not!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"He sent Jesus, His Son, into the world to undo the evil that I was doing, and had done, did He not?" asked the Devil.

"He certainly did, from my reading of the Scriptures," replied the Doctor.

"Well," said the Devil, "you have admitted all that I wanted you to, and I will now read you a few lines from 1 John iii. 8: 'He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' You believe that, do you not?" asked the Devil with a smile.

"Certainly I do," answered the Doctor, with a great deal of warmth. "It is the corner-stone of our faith in Jesus as our Saviour."

"Then tell me," exclaimed the Devil, rising from his seat, "why did not the Almighty destroy me and save His Son? I was the great offender, I the great sinner. Why should innocence die the death of the cross, and I, the arch-fiend, go free? Destroy my works! Am I not here to-day? Am I not as active as I was when in the Garden of Eden? If some one had to die for the sins of the world, why not I, the greatest of all sinners against God and you mortals?"

"Gracious me! What a question to ask me!" exclaimed the Doctor, taken aback completely by so pointed and overwhelming question and questions.

"Answer it," said the Devil, "before we begin again on Job."

"You must give me time," said the Doctor, "to go over the plan of salvation, and God's intention in giving His——"

"Stop!" said the Devil. "I don't want to hear anything about the plan of salvation while I am permitted to walk the earth, and am doing so much evil, when the Almighty can so easily rid Himself of my influence."

"You must give me time to think," replied the Doctor.

"I will give you time to think," said the Devil, "and bid you good evening. Will call again," and so saying, the Devil stepped out of the window.

CHAPTER VIII.

DR. DEVINE'S REFLECTIONS AND TROUBLES—MRS. DEVINE'S
INTENTIONS.

"WHAT sort of being is the Devil?" mused the Doctor, when left alone with his thoughts. "What is he about, and what is he trying to commit me to admitting? I am sorry that I gave him such short, categorical answers, for I fear that I have committed myself. I should have put in qualifications, presumptions, and whereas, and according to certain premises, etc. But then he was so direct in his questions, and stuck so close to the subject he had in view, I could not wander.

"Well, when he comes again I will see what position he is going to take, and what points he will try to make in favor of himself."

Just then Mrs. Devine came into the study, and saw that the Doctor was somewhat excited, and asked him what he was thinking about. "Don't bother your head about the church debt, for we ladies will devise ways and means to pay the church out in a year or two."

"Hang the church debt!" said the Doctor. "I have something far worse than that on my mind."

"What is it? Do tell me, Doctor, for you know that I am interested in all of your affairs, church or otherwise," said Mrs. Devine.

"Yes, my dear, I know you are," replied the Doctor; "but I don't think you can help me in my present trouble."

"What is it, my dear? Tell me," asked Mrs. Devine.

"Why, to tell you the truth," said the Doctor, "I have had another visit from the Devil; two of them, with a promise of another, and how many more I don't know."

"Goodness gracious alive!" exclaimed Mrs. Devine, "you don't say so. And he has done you no harm?"

"Not a bit," answered the Doctor. "As to personal harm, there is none in him. He is one of the politest of visitors, and wonderfully attractive in his personal appearance; the very embodiment of grace, ease, and dignity, and talks and argues like a man, but with more force and clearness."

"Gracious me!" said Mrs. Devine. "I would just like to get a peep at him."

"Yes; and you would fall in love with him," smiled the Doctor, "if you did not know who he was."

"Why, how you talk! I fall in love with the Devil!" exclaimed Mrs. Devine.

"I did not say that, my dear," put in the Doctor. "I said, if you did not know who he was. You know he, as a serpent, insinuated himself into the good graces of old mother Eve, and he has found women his easy victims even to this day."

"Yes," answered Mrs. Devine; "but he has had a great deal more to do with men, if I have read my Bible aright."

"That is true," remarked the Doctor; "but I am now interested in an argument I am having with him."

"Well, do, pray," asked Mrs. Devine, "when he comes again, let me know; for I just want to have a peep at him, the ugly thing!"

"If you should see him, you would want to talk with him," said the Doctor.

"Never! never!" exclaimed Mrs. Devine. "A look will satisfy me, the miserable being!"

"Well, I will try and give you a peep," said the Doctor, "when he comes again."

"Well, do; pray do; for one peep will be enough, the outdacious wretch!" said Mrs. Devine, and she left the study.

"The abuse of my wife does not help the matter, and if she should see him, I don't know what she would do. Well, I will have to await his coming, and see what new position he intends to take in reference to himself, his doings, his influence, and his responsibility in the affairs of men. I presume, from his argument so far developed, that he will want to make God responsible for all the evil in the world.

"And what sort of God would that be if I should admit any such premises? I will not do it. God is just, righteous, loving, merciful, long suffering, full of love, but the hater of all iniquity. He would that none should perish, but that all should turn from their sins and live."

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" said Mrs. Devine as she left the study, "that the Devil should take such a fancy to my husband, and pay him visits. I wonder if all doctors of divinity are his friends, and he more partial to

doctors than to the common run of ministers. I expect he thinks my husband a great deal more intellectual than the rest of ministers, and that is the reason he is so partial to him. Never mind, I'll get a peep at him, the wicked old thing!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE DEVIL'S FOURTH VISIT—THE ARGUMENT—WHAT IS SIN—
WHO THE AUTHOR—JOB'S CASE—GARDEN OF EDEN.

THE Doctor was sitting in his study as usual, feeling uneasy and anxious as to the promised visit. A day had passed, and no visit ; a second day, and no visit ; and now it was on the third evening, and as yet no visit.

"Well," said the Doctor, "I don't know if he will come this evening, but my suspense is unpleasant, and I would——"

"Good evening," greeted his ears so unexpectedly that the Doctor gave a start, and sitting in a chair near by sat the Devil, in a dress perfectly white, and as clean as the conscience of a child.

"When did you come?" asked the Doctor in his surprise.

"When you began to feel impatient of my delay," smiled the Devil.

"Then you knew my thoughts, did you?" asked the Doctor.

"Something of that sort," replied the Devil. "When the finite mind takes on something of the infinite, to comprehend God ; when the mortal puts on its immortality ; when the carnal shall become spiritual ; you will then, and not until then, grasp things purely spiritual.

When your mind shall, in time, become clearer in a spiritual light, you will then see, feel, understand, and grasp the Great Infinite Mind. The trouble with you mortals is, that you do not understand or comprehend God; neither do you understand or comprehend me, the Devil. There was one mortal who reasoned within himself wisely, and gave you good advice. He said:

‘Go teach Eternal Wisdom how to rule,
Then drop into thyself, and be a fool.’

“That mortal was inspired,” said the Devil, “if any one was, for he read the laws of God through the unchanging laws of nature.”

“Something in that,” remarked the Doctor.

“A good deal in that,” said the Devil; “and you will find out before we end this discussion, if you are a fair and honest man, and not like a fanatic or bigot who only looks but one way, and cannot be induced to turn his mental eye in any other, that there are always two sides to a question. All stories are well told until you hear the other side. Some men’s minds are very much like an owl’s eye, for the more light you throw upon them the closer they will shut; or like a mole’s eye, can see but little, and perfectly satisfied with the darkness in which it lives.”

“Very good illustrations,” said the Doctor.

“But to our argument,” said the Devil. “When I left you we were discussing sin. I am the author of sin, you say. You preach it. Your congregation believes it. You quote from the Bible to prove it. Then why did not, or does not, the Almighty destroy me? For when I am put out of the way my works are at an end, are they

not? You say I am the one who lead men down to sin, death, and to hell."

"Well, you see," replied the Doctor, "the great plan of salvation had to be worked out through the sufferings and death of our Lord, and——"

"Stop!" exclaimed the Devil. "I don't want to hear a word about the plan of salvation, when my death or total annihilation would have freed the world from my power and evil influences, as you preach."

"Well, God has a purpose and a plan that He is working out in His infinite wisdom," replied the Doctor.

"That may all be so, and you may be talking wiser than you know," said the Devil. "But why may not that wisdom rid the world of me, for I am only evil, as you say? God, as you have preached, to rid the world of sin, destroyed the human race, save some eight persons in an ark. He made short and quick work of sinful men, and all because I made them to sin. Now, why not have drowned me out? and the world would have grown better instantly. Does that not stand in common-sense reason? I was the head and front of offending, was I not? I out of the way, and earth would have been a heaven."

"I presume so," replied the Doctor.

"Presume!" said the Devil. "Do you not know it? Have I ever changed in the opinion of mankind?"

"I presume not," answered the Doctor.

"Don't presume," said the Devil. "That is begging the question. Say yes or no."

"Well, I will say no," answered the Doctor.

"Then God could just as well have sent His Son some two thousand years sooner than He did to save a wicked

world—the result of my doings—as he did later, and have Him to die on the cross to destroy the works of the Devil. Some one had to die to satisfy God's wrath or justice; had to be a sin-offering, a mediator. How much better, and with more justice, to have destroyed me than to have had an innocent man to suffer for my evil influences! Why did not God destroy me, I ask?" said the Devil.

"God knows best His purposes," replied the Doctor.

"You are right," said the Devil. "But you do not really know anything about the purposes of God; for, if you did, you would not preach about me as you do. But ignorance is always excusable with me; there comes in my charity.

"We will now go back to Job, and take up his case where we left off," said the Devil. "Side issues were raised."

"Proceed," said the Doctor, "and let me hear your side of the case."

"Well," said the Devil, "I had nothing against Job. I did not influence him for good or evil. I really cared nothing about him. God said of Job, he was 'one that feareth God, and escheweth evil.'"

"But God brought a charge against you," replied the Doctor, "when He said: 'Although thou movest me against him to destroy him without cause.'"

"I only asked God if Job served him for nought," replied the Devil; "and God willingly turned him over into my hands to try him. Did he not give me permission to do it? Yea, did he not tell me to do it? As a subject of God, I obeyed Him. I doubted Job's disinterested love and fear of God, and God only used me

for a purpose, to test his servant Job. I did not dare to insult God by refusing, or telling Him to test him Himself."

"That is so," replied the Doctor.

"I moved God so far and no farther," said the Devil.

"Then we must look upon God," asked the Doctor, "as the One who indirectly causes evil through you?"

"Certainly," replied the Devil, "if God can possibly do evil through me, or what you short-sighted mortals call evil, when in fact it is hidden good for your good that is being done. Hear Job on that point, when I took from him his property and children: 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' When I afflicted him with boils, hear him again, when his wife told him to curse God and die: 'What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?' Job knew what he was talking about; never a word did he say against me, for he was a true and good man, and did right because it was right to do right. He feared God, because it was right to fear Him, and not me. He never gave me a thought. He eschewed evil, because he hated evil, and not me."

"Well, you have made out a pretty good and strong case for yourself in Job; but there are other charges I think you will find it hard to explain away about yourself," said the Doctor.

"Proceed," said the Devil. "But before we leave Job, I want to give you an idea. The Book of Job was written in the best days of Jewish thought and investigation. The Jews, like all thinking, developing people, had outgrown Moses as to his idea of God, of the im-

mortality of the soul, and the affliction of good men. Moses held to one idea of God, but the writer of Job to another. It is a dialogue. Moses did not know any thing of the immortality of the SOUL, for he never taught it. The Sadducees believed with Moses on that point; the Pharisees differed. The Jews, as they grew in thought, discussed that question, and of course there was a division of opinion.

"The Book of Job," continued the Devil, "was written long after the days of David, Solomon, Isaiah, and other old prophets. The object of it was to teach that God does afflict good men, a proposition denied by the old Jews, and by many in the days of Jesus. Again, it was to teach the immortality of the SOUL, and a resurrection from the dead, a proposition bitterly denied by the Sadducees. Again, it was to teach an abiding faith in God in the days of prosperity, and also in the days of evil or calamity. And you will observe that human nature was pretty much the same now as it was in the days of Job. The world is full of just such comforters as were Job's friends when a man is in trouble."

"How is that?" asked the Doctor.

"When Job lost all of his property, and was a poor, afflicted, and miserable man," said the Devil, "needing aid, comfort, and consolation from relatives and friends, he found himself accused as being a bad man, a hypocrite, a self-righteous man, etc. But as soon as he again became rich, independent, and influential, you are told: 'Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all

the evil that the Lord had brought upon him : '—not me, you see—'and every man gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.' ”

“That is human nature to this day, and the picture is drawn true to life,” smiled the Doctor.

“Now, preach from that text,” said the Devil, “and let me alone. Preach about something you know something about ; and upon the innate meanness of your poor human nature, Not me, but human nature. Ready to give money when one does not need it, and ready to comfort when the evil is over with.”

“Well, you have given me some facts and ideas,” said the Doctor.

“One word more,” said the Devil, “on the subject. The old Jews, the orthodox Jews of the days of Samuel, David, Solomon, and a later date, did not believe in the immortality of the soul, or future rewards and punishments. Their SHEOL was a peculiar place, one of their own fancy and make-up, and one with which I had nothing to do. I tell you this privately ; you need not repeat it as coming from me, for if you do, few will believe what you say.”

“Thank you for your confidence,” smiled the Doctor. “I will bear in mind your advice.”

“Any other charge against me ?” asked the Devil.

“Yes, a good many,” replied the Doctor.

“Out with them, and don't be modest about it,” smiled the Devil.

“I forgot,” said the Doctor, “a strong point against you in the Job case. You lost on Job, for you said he would curse God.”

“You are correct,” said the Devil ; “for you see that

I am not omniscient, or omnipotent, and that I recognize the power of God. Job did not curse God, as his wife suggested, but he did curse the night in which he was begotten. Job had wonderful faith, and saw the hand of God in all of his sufferings, and hence his patience. Did you ever think of him in that light? Again, Job was a man of wonderful integrity of character, and I could not influence him if I would."

"No, not exactly as you have put it," replied the Doctor; "but I now see that great faith will, or ought, to give to every child of God great patience."

"Precisely," replied the Devil. "Have great faith in God, and you and the rest of unthinking mortals will abuse me less; pray more, live better, and eventually die happier. Get right, and keep right, is my disinterested advice."

GARDEN OF EDEN.

"Well," said the Doctor, "we will change the subject, and talk about the 'TEMPTATION IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN.' I want to hear you on that."

"Very good," smiled the Devil. "I was there, and went by the name of SERPENT, and you shall have an honest version of the affair, though I have been terribly slandered by you mortals."

"Well," said the Doctor; "to be plain, you told old mother Eve a lie to begin with, and have been called the Father of Liars ever since."

"I am aware of the fact," smiled the Devil; "but how do you make out I told Eve a lie? I say I did not."

"Here it is, as plain as it is possible to put it in words:

I read : ‘ And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.’ ”

“ I told her the truth,” said the Devil, “ as I understood the words of God, and as you or any other reasoning mortal would have understood them.”

“ How is that ? ” asked the Doctor.

“ Hand me the Bible,” said the Devil. “ I read : ‘ But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it : for in the day ’— mark the expression— ‘ for in the day that thou eatest thereof ’—THOU, emphasized the Devil— ‘ thou shalt surely die.’ Now I ask you as an honest man, a seeker after truth and light, was anything said about a woman’s eating ? Woman had not then been created, if the second chapter of Genesis be a true history. Did God say, ‘ Nor your wife ’ ? Had He done so, Adam would not have known what He was talking about. He understood the tree, for he saw it ; but he did not know anything about the woman part in the eating. THOU, was a very pointed command, and Adam understood it.”

MRS. DEVINE ENTERS.

Just then Mrs. Devine happened to pass the door of the study, which was a little ajar, and heard the words— “ your wife.” Her curiosity prompted her to peep in. She saw a face that was wonderful to behold—grand, magnificent, attractive, magnetic, and wonderfully pleasing. She was riveted to the spot as if by magic. “ Can that be the Devil,” thought she, “ talking to my husband about me ? and what have I been doing that he should bring me into his conversations ? ” She trembled, and the door was pushed open. The Devil saw her in an

instant, and rising from his seat with a bow and manner so elegant and graceful, and a smile so inviting, said :

"Come in, madam. I am glad to see you, for you are interested in the argument I am having with your husband, the Doctor, and I want you to hear my side of the question, and a word in your defence as a woman, as a daughter of Eve; and he"—pointing to the Doctor—"as a son of Adam."

Mrs. Devine came in trembling, and sat down in a chair beside her husband; and, as she gazed upon the face of the Devil, thought, "What a face! How wonderfully attractive and persuasive! What an intellectual face, and how perfect in figure!"

"I was just saying," said the Devil, addressing himself to Mrs. Devine, "that I, the Devil, called the Serpent, did not lie to your mother Eve in the garden of Eden, as your husband has accused me. He is mistaken."

"I don't know anything about it," tremblingly replied Mrs. Devine. "I was not there."

"But you will know," smiling said the Devil, "before I am through with the argument, for I was there. The object of my visits is to enlighten your husband on certain points of which he is somewhat ignorant, but honest in his belief; and if he is the fair man that I take him to be, he will quit preaching such nonsense about me as he has been doing."

"Gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Devine. "I told him to let you alone, for we have had enough of you in his sermons."

"Now, madam," said the Devil, "do not allow yourself to be at all embarrassed in my presence, but treat me as you would some familiar friend holding argument

with the Doctor ; Mr. Grace, for instance. I can not, and will not, do you the least bodily harm, but want you to hear the argument between your husband and myself."

"Proceed with your argument," said the Doctor.

"Well, as I was saying," said the Devil, "when God gave the commands to Adam not to eat of the tree of knowledge, the woman, afterwards called Eve, had not been created from the rib of Adam. In verse 17, second chapter, the command was given. In verse 18, I read : 'And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone ; I will make an help meet for him.' In verse 22, I read : 'And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.' When Adam saw her, he called her Woman, because she was taken out of man. The word 'man' means, really, a thinker ; and 'woman,' a help thinker. You see the idea, madam ; man many times needs a help thinker: Am I not correct so far, Doctor ?"

"Perfectly correct," said the Doctor.

"Thank you," smiled the Devil. "Now, in chapter iii., verses 1 to 5, you see I told the woman that she should not eat of all the trees. I told her the truth. The woman said of all, except 'the tree in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' I read verse 4 : 'And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.'"

"There you lied and deceived her!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"Not at all," said the Devil ; "for God had not said a word to Adam about any woman, for she had not then been created when the command was given. Eve had never heard a word from God about the tree ; and if

Adam told her anything about the tree, and doubtless he did, I should like to know by whose authority he had a right to embrace his wife in a command given direct to himself, and without any qualifications or insinuations?"

"Oh!" exclaimed the Doctor, "the command was given by implication; for we are told 'man and wife shall be one flesh.'"

"But they are not," smiled the Devil. "If I should knock you down, your wife would not feel the blow."

"She would, through her feelings, feel it," answered the Doctor.

"Then," said the Devil, looking at Mrs. Devine with an arch smile, "when a bad man goes to hell, and his good wife to heaven, she is in hell through her feelings, is she? That is your logic by implication. Heaven would not be a very pleasant place to many pious wives who loved their husbands here, to my certain knowledge."

"Oh, that is altogether different!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"How do you know?" asked the Devil. "But God does not hint or wink, as He is said to do in Acts xvii. 30, by implication. He spoke direct to Adam, without reference to any other being; and Adam knew none other when the command was given him. How, then, and by what authority, did he include his wife, except by a presumptive act on his own part? God said *THOU*, not *thine*, or one who would be *thine*. As God knew what He intended to do in the creation of woman, it strikes me He should have at least hinted to Adam about some one else who should not eat of the tree."

"That is so, Doctor," put in Mrs. Devine, carried away with the Devil's close and searching logic.

"Thank you, madam, for your assistance," smilingly said the Devil.

"You keep quiet," said the Doctor to his wife. "What do you know about it?"

"I told the woman," said the Devil, 'Ye shall not surely die,' and I told her the truth. Adam had no divine authority given him to include his wife in a direct and positive command given to himself."

"But she did die," said the Doctor.

"Not on the day," replied the Devil. "But I read: 'For in the day'—I emphasize that—'that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.'"

"Well, he did die," answered the Doctor.

"Yes," smiled the Devil, "after living nine hundred and thirty years, and begetting a houseful of children. That does not look like very quick punishment 'in the day' when a crime is committed."

"That is so," put in Mrs. Devine.

"Keep quiet," said the Doctor. "What do you know about it?"

"You have heard of 'lynch law,' have you not, Doctor?" asked the Devil.

"Yes," replied the Doctor; "but what has that to do with Adam?"

"Well, if you will allow me to be what you would call a little profane," said the Devil, "God should have 'lynched' Adam as soon as He called him from behind the fig-trees. Not the woman; for God had given her no command, and I addressed myself to her, and not to Adam."

"That is so, Doctor, certain," put in Mrs. Devine.
"He has got you!"

"What do you mean?" asked the Doctor.

"Thank you, madam," smilingly said the Devil.

"But," said the Doctor, "you took a mean advantage of Eve, when her husband was away from her."

MRS. DEVINE DEEPLY INTERESTED.

"I deny the charge," said the Devil, with a little warmth. "It is a base lie upon me, and cannot be proven."

"You must be mistaken," said the Doctor.

"To the authority," said the Devil. "Hand me the Bible. I read, from chapter iii, verse 6: 'And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.' Where is there any mean advantage there? Her husband was standing by her, and he had heard every word I had spoken to his wife. Why did he not put in some word of explanation as to what had been told him about the tree and fruit?"

"I have read somewhere," replied the Doctor, "that Adam was away when you were talking to Eve, and you then sought your opportunity."

"Well, you have only read a lie, that is all I have to say," replied the Devil.

"Doctor," put in Mrs. Devine, "you read it in Milton's 'Paradise Lost.'"

"Perhaps there is where I did get the impression," said the Doctor.

"Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' " said the Devil with a smile, "may be considered a very fine thing by you mortals, but it is a terrible farce upon history. There is not a word of truth in it. That mortal Milton may have been gifted with a remarkable imagination, but his ideas are rather dishonoring to the Almighty. He said I came to Eve as a toad, and whispered in her ear, etc.; all a lie, or, rather, a poetic fiction.

"The fights," continued the Devil, "he so wonderfully depicts, the Almighty's alarm, etc., is an insult to God. The fight, or, rather, my rebellion, did not last two minutes and a half by your time. I and my army were hurled to hell so quick that we never knew we were in a fight against the Almighty Governor of the universe. Trash, all trash, so far as regards myself."

"Well," asked the Doctor, "was Adam standing by when you were talking to Eve?"

"Certainly he was," said the Devil; "nearly as near to her as your wife is to you at this moment."

"Why, then, did he not interfere," asked the Doctor, "when you told her she would not die, and by eating she would be as gods, knowing good and evil?"

"For the reason," answered the Devil, "Adam was as much interested in knowing good and evil as the woman. His curiosity was as much excited and aroused as that of the woman, and hence he was a silent listener, and wanted the woman to eat; wanted to see the effects upon her; wanted to see what it was to die; for he knew nothing of the meaning of the word, or else he would have protested."

"That is so, Doctor, as sure as you are sitting there. I never thought of it in that light before. Old father

Adam was cunning, just like you men. There is where men get their rascality from to betray woman," put in Mrs. Devine.

"Hush! What are you talking about?" said the Doctor. "Do you intend to take sides against me?"

"No," said his wife; "but I can appreciate a good point when well taken and made."

"Thank you, madam," smiled the Devil.

"Well, did not Adam know he would die if he ate the apple?" asked the Doctor.

"There is no mention of an apple as the fruit," said the Devil.

"Where did I get the idea that it was an apple?" asked the Doctor.

"From Milton, I expect," put in his wife.

"It was a fruit," said the Devil, "that had the power to make one wise, and has made many very wise. I will not tell you what kind of fruit it was, but I very well know. The Eastern mind is deep and subtile, and glories in esoteric and secret meanings."

"Well, did not Adam know if he ate of the fruit, whatever it was, that he would die?" asked the Doctor.

"Perhaps he did, and then perhaps he did not. Eve was very much alive when she handed it to him, and she had ate. Perhaps he doubted God; perhaps he doubted his understanding of the command; perhaps he doubted the dying part, just as you mortals are doing to-day. You don't fear God or His commands. But one thing is certain, and that is, he had just as much so-called curiosity as the woman to know good and evil, and he desired to be wise."

"That is so, Doctor, as sure as you are born. Adam was not one whit better than Eve as to curiosity, and yet he had the command direct not to eat, and the woman did not. The gentleman there," pointing to the Devil——

"Excuse me, if you please, madam," interrupted the Devil; "do not call me a gentleman, for you have too many gentlemen among you mortals that I would not associate with willingly, though they may be sent to me some of these days for safe keeping. Call me 'Devil.'"

"Excuse me, if you please, Mister——"

"Not mister, or colonel, or general, if you please, but plain Devil. I was once the Almighty's brightest archangel, but I have lost all by sin and rebellion."

"Well, the Devil has fairly and honestly stated the case, for it seems that Adam was standing by, an intent listener," said Mrs. Devine.

"Correct, madam," smilingly said the Devil; "and her husband never told her to hush, or asked her what she knew about it, or what she was talking about, when in conversation with me. Adam, your old father, was very much of a gentleman as to manners from your rules of etiquette."

"Do you hear that, Doctor?" asked his wife. "See how polite he was to his wife. So considerate of her feelings, and so respectful in demeanor. I wish all of his sons had inherited his politeness with his 'original sin.'"

"Great heavens!" exclaimed the Doctor. "Do you intend to take sides with the Devil as against me? Has

he converted you to his way of reasoning and thinking?"

"Well, you have not answered the points he has made," replied Mrs. Devine, with a good deal of self-assertion. "He did not lie to Eve, and you cannot prove it from Adam's conduct at the tree; for he was either a fool or a coward, or he had a great deal of curiosity, but he was, I think, a real gentleman, after all."

"Well, well, I am sorry you came in here," said the Doctor; "for I find the Devil has not lost his power over womankind yet."

"Nor men either, as to that," put in his wife.

"There it is again," put in the Devil. "Charging me with doing all evil. Your wife, Doctor, has as much sense as you have. She certainly sees a strong and clear point as quick as you do."

"Thank you for the compliment," smiled Mrs. Devine.

"I think it is about time for you to leave," said the Doctor to his wife.

"Let her remain until we get through with the fruit argument," said the Devil.

"Proceed," said the Doctor.

"Well, Adam," said the Devil, "loved his wife truly, and he ate of the fruit. His love for Eve outranked his fear of God or death, whatever that was. He was a true husband, and had determined to stand by his wife, be the consequences good or evil. All true husbands will die in defence of their wives, and never abuse, insult, or ill treat them."

"Hear that, Doctor!" exclaimed his wife. "Preach that kind of doctrine from the pulpit; there are many

men who need just such kind of talk. There is Deacon Snarl, and what a life poor dear Mrs. Snarl has of it with him ! ”

“ What are you talking about ? ” asked the Doctor. “ The Devil is wrong as to Adam and his gallantry. ”

“ How so ? ” asked the Devil.

“ Why, when God called Adam from his hiding place among the trees, ” said the Doctor, “ and asked him why he was naked, and how he knew it, and if he had been eating of the tree of good and evil, what did Adam say ? ”

“ Why, he simply told the truth, and nothing else, ” replied the Devil.

“ How do you make that out ? ” asked the Doctor.

“ Plain enough, ” replied the Devil. I read : ‘ And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. ’ ”

“ Precisely, ” said the Doctor. “ Going back on his wife, instead of standing by her as he should have done ; and yet you say he did. ”

“ He told God, ” replied the Devil, “ ‘ whom thou gavest to be with me. ’ There we have his defence of his wife. He was trying to get the woman off easily. He meant to say by implication, and you mortals are adept in that : ‘ If any one is to blame, You, who gave me the woman, and gave her no command, is somewhat to blame in the matter. She knew no better than to eat ; she is innocent in a great degree. ’ That was the way Adam reasoned, and the only way he could, under the circumstances and peculiar surroundings at that time. It was the first time he had ever seen God angry. ”

“ Your argument is fallacious and weak, ” said the

Doctor. "God did not so view it, by any means. For Adam, the woman, and yourself were cursed by Him."

"Then was the time," said the Devil, with a smile, "for God to have made short work with me. Then was 'the day.' If I began evil with the first created, what was to be expected of me when I had full swing and free license in the world, with its millions of people, in time? The world had to be flooded on my account, you preach, for it became desperately wicked. Then, again, it was my time to have been put out of the way by annihilation."

"God knew what was best for the world," said the Doctor. "And he knew how to punish, too, and did it in His own good way."

"Very true," said the Devil; "and He had a purpose in letting me live, and in letting Adam and Eve live. I understand God, but you do not, your theology to the contrary notwithstanding."

"I have learnt something," said Mrs. Devine, "by listening to the Devil; and he has nobly defended woman as to her so-called curiosity."

"Thank you," said the Devil. "It is all a mistake to suppose that a desire for knowledge is either a sin or crime in the sight of God. Man was created a reasoning, rational creature, that he might reason, think, investigate, and search out truth. The woman was actuated by the highest and noblest impulses of her nature, and was true to her mental make-up, in a desire for knowledge. She is man's companion; in soul aspirations his equal, if not his superior. She is the mother of children, and hence holds the key of the soul, and stamps the coin of char-

acter. Every thinking child asks its mother a thousand questions, because it is hungry for knowledge, and would eat from the tree of knowledge. A child who asks no questions is on the borderland of idiocy or imbecility. Remember that, madam."

"Thanks! thanks!" exclaimed Mrs. Devine. "You are for woman's true rights, I see, and her right to think."

"Certainly," replied the Devil; "for why did I approach her instead of her husband? A woman is not the slave of a man, but his equal, in her peculiar sphere."

"Thanks! thanks!" exclaimed Mrs. Devine, "for your sentiments and thoughts. I bid you good evening, and am glad that I have met you. I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you again."

"What an extraordinary personage the Devil is!" said Mrs. Devine to herself. "The Doctor has his equal and match in him. I should not be surprised if he did not convince him that he is on the wrong track of thought in abusing him so much in the pulpit."

"Well," said the Doctor, "I believe you have made a convert of my wife on the temptation in the Garden, and have given her a better opinion of her old mother Eve than she has ever had before."

"No doubt of it," replied the Devil; "and I hope you will take the same view of it, for it is sound and correct."

"I will have to think over that, for my teaching has been very different from your exegesis," said the Doctor.

"Very well, think on it, think over it, and think

about it," said the Devil. "I will call again soon, and give you a little, but not a complete, esoteric talk about the tree of knowledge. I bid you good evening," and, as if by magic, he disappeared through the floor.

CHAPTER X.

DOCTOR AND MRS. DEVINE'S DISCUSSION—AN UNEXPECTED
VISIT—SOME NEW IDEAS.

THE Doctor sat and mused for some time over the new phase which the Devil had put upon the temptation of Eve. Said he: "If God had intended that the woman should not have eaten of the tree, for he cursed her in a way, it does stand to reason that He should have said something to her about it, or instructed Adam to tell her. But not a word did He say to him, but told him explicitly that he should not eat of it. Adam had no power of attorney from God to instruct Eve upon the command he had received. He had no idea of a second person like himself. He never asked for a companion, for he must have been satisfied with the companionship of God and His angels. He was pure like them, and knew nothing of human passions until a wife was given him. Then nature naturally asserted itself.

"Again," continued the Doctor: "what could Adam have known about dying and death? He had never seen any thing or animal that had died, and it must have been a profound mystery to him." Thus reasoned the Doctor in his study, and a man is thoroughly true to himself when he reasons with himself. It is the opinions of others we fear, and our relationship to society.

The next evening, while sitting in his study, enjoying a cigar and his thoughts, his wife came in, and sitting down by him said :

"Well, here I saw that most wonderful being, that spirit of evil who curses the world, and seems to thwart God in his intentions, and who has brought sin and death into the world. I do not comprehend him. As to his appearance, there is a grand sublimity in it—the sublimity of intellect. We are told that we were made a little lower than the angels; and if that be so, how must an angel look, if he be a fallen angel, which he is by his own confession ?"

"I presume," said the Doctor, "that in our spiritual natures we are a little lower made, and not in our corporeal make-up; for that came from the earth, and is earthy. But the spirit of God which was breathed into us and we became a living soul, constitutes our spiritual likeness to angels; that is, if we are pure in thought and action."

"That may be so," said his wife, "but if the Devil is permitted to walk the earth as we have seen him, and unknown as to his real character, what an impression he would create among the women! For who could resist him?"

"Just so," said the Doctor. "He fooled Eve without the least trouble, and won you over to his way of thinking in a very short time. Women are his easy prey, it seems."

"Beg your pardon," replied Mrs. Devine. "Men no more resist him than the women, if the Bible be true. His greatest influence is over men; for he enters them by *legions*, and only about *seven* get into the worst of women."

"How you talk!" said the Doctor. "I presume he is no respecter of persons, and whenever he tells a woman off, men are bound to follow, just as Adam did in the fruit-tree affair. It is strange what an influence woman has over us; and will make us sin, if sin she is after, with our eyes wide open, and our minds clear. Adam is a fair representative and illustration. We are fools, just like he was."

"I beg your pardon, sir," replied his wife. "It is you men—not you, of course—who make women sin. You deceive us with fair words, insinuating promises, and strong manifestations of love; and we foolish creatures—of course, not I—believe every word you say."

"Well, we will not discuss that point; but the Devil does not argue fairly when he makes God the real author of evil, instead of himself. He talks as if he is a real necessity to the world; a necessary evil; a kind of troublesome comfort to mortals; and that the world is better for his existence; for if not, God would annihilate him. He went so far as to say that God ought to have annihilated him in the Garden of Eden, or when He destroyed the world by a flood. He does not seem to care about annihilation; talks as if he were unhappy because he lives. In Revelations, such is predicted as to his fate; but that book is pretty hard to understand. The Jewish mind revelled in mysticism and imagination. We will know all about it the day after the Day of Judgment, for then we will take in the full situation of affairs."

"Well, to say the least of it, he has convinced me that Eve was more sinned against than sinning. And I

think, Doctor, you will have to change your mind as to the sinfulness of Eve's sin."

"Never! never! never!" exclaimed the Doctor. "The curse she received, declares that she was guilty of disobedience; the curse Adam received, declared his guilt; and the curse the serpent, or the Devil, received, declared he was also guilty. All sinned, and all fell under divine wrath. That is argument enough that she did wrong. The Devil is a sophist."

"Well, he may be," replied Mrs. Devine; "but it is certain the Devil knew that God had never said a word to Eve about the tree, about dying, or anything of the sort."

"You are correct, madam," said a voice from a chair within four feet of them.

Doctor and Mrs. Devine gave a start as if shocked, and, looking in the direction from whence came the voice, there sat the Devil, with a most pleasant smile on his wonderfully handsome face. He had on a suit the color of sulphur, and he smelt as if he had been about or had handled the article.

"Where did you come from?" asked the Doctor.

"From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it," replied the Devil; "but more immediately from hell, where I have been busy in receiving the souls of mortals sent me, killed in battle, and who had been making a very hell of this fair and beautiful earth."

"Gracious!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"Oh, I am so glad to see you!—no—I mean, I want to ask you a question—no—not that—ah—I mean, I want you to explain something to me," half stammered out Mrs. Devine.

"Certainly, madam, with the greatest pleasure," said the Devil.

"Suppose that Eve had only eaten the fruit, and not Adam, what then?" asked Mrs. Devine.

"I am not omniscient," answered the Devil, "and know not the mind of the Almighty. But I will say this as a natural sequence of the eating. She would have been like the gods, knowing good and evil, while her husband would know nothing of such things. She would not have been a fit companion for him, for there would have been no affinity of feeling, no harmony of temperament, no association of ideas, no congeniality of love. She would have been far his intellectual superior. But, as it was, she was not cursed, but a sorrow put upon her. Adam received the curse; or, rather, the ground was cursed for him—a sort of atonement, I presume, that the innocent ground had to bear, though Adam in sorrow had to eat of it all the days of his life. He had to go to hard work to make a living, or starve. As to myself, I was cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field. But the greatest shame put upon me was to be the principal keeper of mortals in hell, sent to me by the Almighty. Deep humiliation! A great curse! From a bright archangel, to be the keeper of hell! Annihilation is far better."

"How you talk!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"God, you see, madam," addressing Mrs. Devine, "intended, by putting a sorrow on Eve, to make her a fit companion for her husband. True, He did make her inferior in a certain sense, by telling her Adam should rule over her. The plans of God are very deep, and you mortals will only understand them when you take

on your immortality, put on a spiritual body. Here you are the companion of man—his mother, sister, and wife. He cannot live without you, nor should he forget the reverence and love due you. Spiritually, you are far purer than man; of a softer and more gentle nature. Your charms of person and face will always control him more or less, and your love power over him is illimitable.”

“You are inclined to flatter woman, I see,” said Mrs. Devine.

“Don’t say that of me,” said the Devil. “I do not flatter anyone—not the Ruler of the universe; I know Him, I fear Him, but never attempt to flatter Him. I could not if I would. My curse is eternal, and my punishment likewise.”

“Tell me,” asked the Doctor, “what was your object in making Eve sin, or, rather, in tempting her with the fruit?”

“Curiosity on my part,” replied the Devil. “The creation of man from the earth, and the breathing of God upon him, making him a living soul; his dual nature, temporal and spiritual; the peculiarity of his mind, so different from angels; his limited powers, and his gift of procreation, something denied to angels, excited my greatest curiosity. To use a mortal’s expression, he was to me a *lusus naturæ*. I did not comprehend him; and the only way to find out anything about Eve and Adam was to talk with them, to experiment a little with them, to see if they were wise. I found them very ignorant as to what was called good and evil; and as I knew all about the command to Adam, I thought I would begin first with the woman,

for she looked more like an angel than did Adam, with his beard and general make-up. I knew something about angels, but nothing about *MAN*. Association, as you know, makes one wise, either for good or evil. Adam impressed me as rather an odd sort of looking lower angel."

"So you did not desire to bring sin into the world?" asked the Doctor.

"Sin! sin!" exclaimed the Devil. "No! no! I was only experimenting with a new creation that I did not comprehend, a profound mystery to me. Angels I knew all about; man, simply nothing. I thought I knew something about the mysteries of that tree, and upon that I thought to make an issue with Eve. You know why. If she ate, I wanted to see what Adam was going to do in the matter. I did not tell her to offer the fruit to Adam; she did that of her own free volition, and in the generosity and love of her woman's nature, as I found out. The trouble with you, Doctor, is, you imagine that I am omniscient and omnipotent, and exist independent of God; can thwart His plans and His intentions; that I can enter the heart of man and supplant the Almighty—a great mistake you mortals are laboring under in respect to myself. I am here for the wise purposes of God; please remember that."

"Well, you see that God punished your curiosity, and the curiosity or the desire of Adam and Eve to be wise. Through you, sin came into the world," said the Doctor.

"Yes, to a certain extent. But I do not look upon the cursing of the ground as a very great evil to Adam. And as to the sorrow and conception of woman, it has been to her the greatest of all blessings."

"How is that?" asked the Doctor.

"To that question," replied the Devil, "I will refer you to your wife; to every loving mother as she nurses and foudles her child. She loves her child, with the deep and unselfish love of a mother, for what she has suffered in giving birth to it. It is the suffering that develops a mother's love; for without it, the pain, the anxiety, the nursing, a child would have nine times out of ten a poor and indifferent mother. God knew how to touch the tender chords of a mother's love, and what He did, He did in love for woman."

"That is so!" exclaimed Mrs. Devine; "and if it is a sorrow, it is the sweetest sorrow of life. I thank God for His wonderful love to woman."

"But the sin you brought into the world through Eve," said the Doctor, "has been terrible, very terrible. Think of the wars, pestilences, famines, diseases, and all of the millions of sins of individuals. All that came from the eating of the fruit. All your work, and your own volition, as you say. How much better it would have been for you to have watched the great developments of God's intentions, and to have seen what would have been the result of obedience instead of disobedience; of obeying and not disobeying."

"Very true," replied the Devil, "from your standpoint of finite reasoning. Without sin there would doubtless have been another heaven on this earth, with creatures half divine, who would never die, but continue procreation without limit. Without death, how could the world hold the living? What about the animals, carnivorous, graminivorous, granivorous, etc? All was peace among them. In a word, there would have been two

heavens instead of one. God has no need for two. Had He turned the world over to me—and I what you say I am in the pulpit—after man had sinned, then there would have been two hells instead of one. God was satisfied with the one over which I am principal keeper. It is large enough for all the people of this world, if they desire to make it their future home. But man will ever be true to his mental nature, and thirst after knowledge; and for it he will risk his life in this world, and take his chances for the next. I was, no doubt, used by God for wise purposes; for if not, then God does not know everything, nor can He prevent evil if He should so desire. You will not say that of the Governor of the universe, I know.”

“Certainly not,” replied the Doctor, “but I cannot see how you are sinless.”

“We will discuss that at a future time, as I reveal myself to you,” said the Devil.

“Well,” said Mrs. Devine, “you have put me to thinking differently about old mother Eve and the temptation. A new version altogether, and one that is worthy of serious consideration. I hear my baby crying, and must go to it. I bid you good evening, and hope to see you some future day.”

“I hope not,” said the Devil, with a peculiar expression. “There is for you a brighter world than this when the end comes to you. You fear and love God, and your election is sure, if you but continue to tread that path through life.

“There,” said the Devil, “is the true and devoted mother all over; and she will never say that in bearing children she has been cursed. She would not change

the law of her nature or creation if she could ; for the pleasure and joy that a mother feels at the birth of her child, far outweighs all transient pain. If that was the only sorrow she had to suffer, she would bless me for entering the Garden."

"Well, you see what an influence you have had on my wife," said the Doctor. "She has eaten of the tree, and will be offering me the fruit in the way of argument. Your arguments will be her arguments."

"What about the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil'?" asked the Doctor.

"That story has several meanings. It is really a symbol, and reflects both on woman and man in a certain way. The Eastern mind had peculiar ideas about women. You see it in their homes to-day. But there is a meaning that is instructive. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was but one tree, and bore both good and evil fruit. Man is a tree—a tree of knowledge, with good and evil influences within, and growing out of him, and he knows good from evil, and evil from good. He can eat of the fruit or not, as he pleases. He can hold in subjection his strong and aggressive passions, or give rein to them. As his passions grow upon him, they are exerted for good or evil. His conscience is the monitor within him which tells him when he has eaten of forbidden fruit, and his reason is the accusing judge. His good in him is his God ; the evil in him is his Devil. Man is a tree that is ever growing and ever bearing fruit. So of woman, for she came from man, was taken out of him. She is not above or superior to her creation. She can tempt in numberless ways, and man will eat, knowing the fruit to be forbidden. 'The Serpent,' means tempta-

tion ; it also means, esoterically, both sophist and seducer, to either woman or man. The serpent will take either in its embrace, as suits its fancy. The serpent is wise, and knows when to strike, whom to strike, and how to strike successfully. The serpent may or may not be a man, but voice declares there must be humanity and human nature concealed somewhere. It may be hidden, but human nature is in close proximity to human voice. Passions once aroused are dangerous in either man or woman ; and a knowledge of good and evil is all essential for self-protection. Without such knowledge, reason, and conscience, man and woman would be no better than brutes."

"I think I understand your meaning," said the Doctor, "but the plain old story as told in the Bible suits me very well. I do not care to study symbols, or mythological allegories, or Eastern esoterics."

"Every one to his own taste," said the Devil.

"I have read somewhere," said the Doctor, "all angels are men ; there are no women in heaven."

"Wrong," replied the Devil, "angels are neither men nor women. Passions are not known in heaven."

CHAPTER XI.

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS—WHO WAS HE—THE DEVIL'S
IDEA OF HIM.

"WELL," said the Doctor, "I have heard your version of your doings in Eden, and as the argument is at an end, and nothing more can be made of it, I want you to explain to me your object in trying to tempt Jesus in the wilderness. You certainly had some object in view, and a bad one, I am thinking."

"I knew that would come next. I read your thoughts before you uttered them," said the Devil.

"Glad of it," replied the Doctor. "I think you will find it rather a hard matter to explain yourself satisfactorily, as you imagine you have done in the cases of Job and Eve. You had a different kind of personage to deal with, one every way your equal; yea, far your superior in every respect, for He was the God-man you approached, and it is on record you most signally failed."

"Very true," smiled the Devil; "and I failed in the case of Job, did I not? Was he also God-man? I think I can throw a good deal of light on the subject you divines seem to ignore. At least I have nothing to conceal, and shall speak very plainly and to the point. Truth is truth, and therefore let the truth be told. It may

wound your sensibilities and your theology and your Trinity ideas."

"Well, you admit, then," said the Doctor, "that you did attempt to tempt our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who was coequal with the Father? Nothing like being clear and distinct as to who He was, either as to His name or person."

"The very idea," replied the Devil. "Plainness of speech leaves no room for a misunderstanding."

"Well, to the point," said the Doctor. "Why did you attempt to tempt Him?"

"Do you think He was God, or that He had any more of the divine nature in Him than any other good man who sets himself up as a teacher or reformer?" asked the Devil.

"Certainly! certainly!" exclaimed the Doctor. "He was God begotten, immaculate in His conception and in all of His life."

"Do I understand you to say," asked the Devil, "that He was more than man; that He was not like other men in their creation or begetting; and there was more of God in Him than man; or, as you express it, He was God-man in the flesh?"

"You have stated the point clearly," said the Doctor. "Or, as I should state it, He was God, of the Godhead, and at the same time the Son of God."

"Well, to begin with," replied the Devil, "if He was what you say He was, He was no pattern for you mortals to follow, and it is sheer nonsense to preach it from the pulpit; His nature was not your nature. To be more direct, I do not exactly comprehend or take in such a mixture of characters. As God, I can understand

that ; as a Son of God divinely begotten, if such a thing is possible, I can understand, for Jupiter was very much of a father ; but the Trinity of the Godhead is above and beyond my comprehension. You mortals may understand it, but I do not, and I must frankly own up to my ignorance. I mean those who believe in 'three Gods,' yet, by some peculiarity of mortal reasoning, all three Gods in one God."

"Well, St. John is very clear on that point, and I take his meaning, which is plain enough to the most common mind. I read: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.' Is not that plain enough?" asked the Doctor.

"Yes," replied the Devil, "save that which said He was begotten of the Father; for there is a palpable contradiction. God begetting himself is beyond my mental comprehension. You have begotten a child; but you are not the child, nor is the child you. As a father you rank the child in authority. You may make your child your agent; you may beget, you may send, you may empower, but after all you are not the child, nor the child you. I may be what you mortals call a fool about such matters, but it is beyond my mental exegesis."

"Whether you understand it or not," said the Doctor, "the Word was God, and the Word was made flesh, and God and Jesus are one, singly and solely one; that is my idea, and that is what I preach."

"Very good," said the Devil. "So God and Jesus

are one and the same, and by some incarnate mystery—wonderful mystery to me—Jesus, God, was clothed ‘in flesh.’”

“Precisely,” said the Doctor.

“Well, then, if that is so,” answered the Devil with some emphasis, “it would have been impossible for me to have tempted God Almighty, my Creator, your Creator, and the Creator of the world. The idea is a stupendous, astonishing, astounding, not to say a most ridiculous, absurdity; and could only find lodgment in the brains of men educated in the wonderful belief of gods, goddesses, demi-gods, etc. The idea is begotten of mythological beliefs; the old Egyptian thought; Greek and Roman; but is very near akin to the Persian Trimūrti—Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. And you have, in the teachings of Zoroaster, Ormuzd, the creator of that which is good in man, and of Ahriman, all that is evil in man; and, as taught by such a faith, there is constant war between Ormuzd and Ahriman; but in time, some distant age of the world, Ormuzd will be victorious over that Persian devil, Ahriman. Your St. John, I believe, has some such idea about me in some far-off day. His ‘Revelation’ is truly a wonderful revelation to me. Nor should I forget to mention the Magi, who were priests. Matthew mentions them as the wise men of the East, who came to worship Jesus at his birth. You have no record that Jesus ever returned the visit.”

“Well, what has all that got to do with Jesus as God?” asked the Doctor. “I only see that you are well posted about other religions.”

“A great deal, as you will see before we are through with the question of the temptation in the wilderness,”

replied the Devil. "Facts of history cannot be brushed aside as of no value in an argument. Blind faith suits the mind of a child, of an ignorant person, and those not given to thought. Man demands reason, facts, and logic to convince his mind, if he is after truth. I am not discussing with you faith, but facts of history, and especially myself."

"Proceed with your so-called facts," said the Doctor.

"Well, if Jesus was God," said the Devil, "I could not have approached Him. Do you take me for a fool spirit—I, the Devil, who has seen God, who has felt His power, He who was my Creator? For me to approach Him with a temptation by asking Him to worship me for a consideration? To offer Him power, glory, and wealth? The absurdest of absurdities! The folly of all follies of such a belief!"

"Stop! stop!" exclaimed the Doctor. "He was then man in the flesh, of us, and like us; subject to the same temptations as we are, and born under the law."

"Stop right there," said the Devil. "If He was God, He was all law; He ranked all law, social and divine, in a nature and beyond nature. He was at all times, in all places, under all circumstances, in every surrounding, a law maker. He needed not to talk about the 'law and the prophets;' 'It is written;' 'The scriptures must be fulfilled, etc.' If He was really God as Trinitarians preach Him, God to you mortals is a miracle, and He therefore cannot be explained, examined, or reasoned with or reasoned about. You believe in Him as a matter of faith, and not sight. He could not possibly be under any law, any more than an Eastern

despot was bound by any law, save the law of his own will."

"But Jesus said He was God," put in the Doctor.

"Beg your pardon," replied the Devil. "Jesus was too much of a Jew to have said any such thing. I understand Jesus, but you do not. Speeches have been put into His mouth He never uttered. If He said He was the Son of God, He spoke of Himself as a pure, unadulterated Jew; a very pious Jew. He had a most supreme contempt for the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jerusalem as He saw and talked with them. His parables were biting sarcasms upon their faith, actions, and professions, and at the same time teaching great truths; and that was why He was so popular with the common people who gladly heard Him. He also had a contempt for rich men. His love and fear of God was His ruling passion. He called himself the 'Son of man,' which meant 'prophet,' as you very well know; for Ezekiel called himself that above ninety times. I have explained to you, in our discussion on Job, that the Jews called themselves 'sons of God.'"

"Then you only thought Him a good, pious Jew, well posted in Jewish scriptures, did you?" asked the Doctor.

"That, and nothing more," replied the Devil. "He was born of a woman, you understand that. No miracle there; you know how that miracle is wrought," said the Devil with a smile. "He was circumcised like all Jewish boys. You do not worship a circumcised God, do you? He grew up like all children; no miracle there. He worked at the carpenter's trade. Did your God ever drive the jack-plane, or saw a board? He was not distinguished from his brothers and sisters as anything

above or beyond them, and by those who knew the family of Joseph and Mary. If God, why the necessity to work like other men until He was thirty years of age? If He was so precocious at twelve years of age, confounding the doctors of the law in the Temple at Jerusalem, what was he doing from twelve to thirty years of age in Nazareth?

"I do not know," answered the Doctor.

"I know what He was doing," said the Devil. "He was working at the carpenter's trade, and, when He had spare time, was studying the Jewish law and the prophets; and in His controversies with the Pharisees and Sadducees in Jerusalem, astonished them by his familiarity with the scriptures when He turned expounder of the 'law and the prophets.' On the sabbath, as was His custom, He went into the synagogue to read and expound the law and the prophets. He said to them (Luke iv. 18): 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel.' Being a Nazarene, a Jew who professed extraordinary purity of life, those of Jerusalem held Him in contempt. He never married, had no desire for riches, nor did He seek either political or priestly honors. Pure, simple, learned, He impressed by His manners and original sayings and illustrations. Like thousands since His day, men have quit the shop, the office, the trade, and took to preaching. They felt they had a call to preach. So thought Jesus."

"Well, to the direct point under consideration," said the Doctor. "What was your chief object in wanting Jesus to worship you? You failed, as you know."

"Just so," replied the Devil. "I told you, as you

remember, that I was not omniscient. I failed in his case, just as I did in that of Job, who held to his integrity, and believed and trusted in God. Daniel was a man of wonderful integrity of character ; so were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. I never interfered with those men ; they acted independently of me, just as all good and true men did then, now, and will do in the future. Men who hold to their integrity of character have nothing to fear from me. Bad and wicked men do evil, violate law, and are fearless of God, without any suggestions from me, just as good men do right without any direct influence from God. Neither God nor I drive men as men drive horses. Like Adam, they can eat or not, just as they please. I never asked Adam to eat ; it was his wife who presented the temptation to him. I had not a word to say to Adam, as you know. Man is his own keeper, a full, free agent."

"Well, to your object?" again asked the Doctor.

"Curiosity, as in Job and Eve ; a desire to know something about Jesus, as to who He really was. There was some discussion as to His character and birth among those who thought they knew Him well. He had quit the carpenter's trade, and had resolved to turn reformer, teacher, or leader of men. He had an original idea in His head as to God, and the kingdom of God, which He afterwards taught, and one Paul caught His meaning very clearly, though he had never heard Him talk. I read from Matt. iv. 1 : 'Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.' Not my 'spirit,' you see ; some other spirit. There I am used as an instrument again. I was in the wilderness, interfering with no one, for I did not care for you mor-

tals. In Luke I read : ' And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil.' Another Job case ; sent there to be tempted by me. Put in a condition of hunger, to be tempted, by going into a wilderness. I did not ask Him to fast forty days or any one day. He did that of His own voluntary act. But it seems that He was sent to me to be tempted, and I failed, just as I have in tempting every good man who resists evil, though you say it is the Devil who prompts to evil. Hear Joseph when Potiphar's wife made an advance to him. I took no hand in that affair. I implanted no lustful passion in the woman. Joseph had the same passion, but hear him : ' How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ? ' "

" But you do prompt to evil, and you know it," said the Doctor, with some warmth. " This Bible is full of your evil deeds, and your war with God and His good influences."

" I am fully aware of what the Bible says about me," smilingly said the Devil. " But you will know better some of these days ; your eyes will be opened spiritually."

" They are open now ; for I see you, and feel your evil influences as you talk. You really want to make God an evil doer."

" Not at all," said the Devil. " He has implanted in you mortals strong passions and desires for good and evil, and He has given you reason and judgment to govern yourselves as rational beings—that, and nothing more. All that you or any other mortal has to do, is to resist all evil influences, whether internal or external, carnal or mental ; whether passions of the body or pas-

sions of the mind. Don't give me—the Devil—a thought, and I will not trouble you in any manner whatsoever."

"I believe you lie," said the Doctor; "and, to be very plain with you, you love evil for the sake of evil."

"Be polite," smilingly said the Devil, "and do not retail an old slander on my character. I will put you right before I am done with you, and you will thank me."

"But you failed to tempt Jesus," put in the Doctor.

"Yes," answered the Devil; "for men firm in their integrity of character, strong in their faith in God, who really fear God, and do right from principle and not from policy, cannot be bought, bribed, caressed, intimidated, or worked upon through their necessities or fears. Abraham lied about his wife for fear of his life, and did not trust God. Isaac did the same thing, and Jacob only promised to serve God for certain considerations. Joseph, his son, was the noblest of them all. He did right because he feared God. To sin against God he would not, for he feared and loved Him too much."

"Good for Joseph!" put in the Doctor.

"Yes, I had nothing to do with any of them," said the Devil. "I had no hand in Joseph's case, for the woman was far superior to me in all such temptations, and she failed. I, no doubt, would have made a worse failure had I been brought in contact with Joseph. When a woman fails to tempt a man with her charms, it is no use for me to try in any way. David and Solomon stood in no need of my services in such matters. In fact, I could not keep up with them. Their passions were the Devil in them."

“What do you mean by saying that Jacob promised to serve God for a consideration?” asked the Doctor.

“Hand me the Bible. I read,” said the Devil, “from Gen. xxviii. 20 : ‘And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God.’ He was fleeing from Esau whom he had cheated, and also lied to his father to get the blessing that rightfully belonged to Esau. He was willing to serve God, like thousands of others, for a consideration. Like some, perhaps, are doing in your congregation. Pious or religious, because it pays them from a business standpoint. I do not prompt them to be hypocrites, for their pocketbooks are temptation enough, without any interference on my part. Between women and a love for money, man has all the temptations he needs to send him to hell, without my exerting myself in any degree whatsoever to influence him to evil. Jacob wanted money, and he made it, hand over hand. Jesus, on the contrary, had a supreme contempt for wealth and rich men, and said hell was full of them, and He was correct in His statement. The camel and the needle’s eye covered the ground. I could not tempt such a man as Jesus with riches, or power, or glory. The glory of God in His spiritual nature was all he wanted. I could have gotten Jacob to worship me in less time than it would take you to walk into the next room and back. Do I not look like a being worthy of worship?” asked the Devil, putting on a most extraordinary appearance.

“But Jesus knew you,” replied the Doctor, “and

called you Satan, and told you to get behind Him, and you left Him."

"Precisely so," replied the Devil; "and all good and true men will say the same thing to all evil passions, desires, and temptations. Jesus said to Peter on a certain occasion, when Peter rebuked Him for what He was saying (Matt. xvi. 23): 'But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.' Peter certainly did not think he was rebuking God when Jesus told him that He had to die, and be raised again the third day. Peter thought He was talking nonsense, and spoke as man to man. He did not see any God in Him; for, with a three years' acquaintanceship, he certainly ought to have understood who Jesus was, whether man or God. When Peter lied, and swore that he did not know Jesus, he certainly did not think he was denying his God and Creator. When he saw him crucified, he certainly did not think it was Jehovah, the God of Israel, on the cross. If He ever impressed Peter He was God, it must have been after His resurrection, but certainly not before. How strange it was He should have gone into Galilee after His resurrection, and not into the Temple, and paid His respects to the high priest who was such a swift witness against Him before Pilate! He could have walked the streets of Jerusalem then, and proclaimed Himself the living God. Who could touch Him? Peter was not I, nor was I Peter; though we both went by the name of Satan when rebuked. You see I was about in those days as well as now."

"So I am to understand," asked the Doctor, "that

Jesus was only a man, and that you were simply used to tempt Him, to test His character?"

"That, and nothing more," replied the Devil. "For, as usual, I was only an instrument in the hands of God, to try men. Had not Jesus had temptations like all other men, there would have been no virtue in Him. It is temptations which try, develop, and declare a man's true character. God certainly did not stand in need of temptations, but Jesus did; for He was a great teacher appointed of God to correct the abuses of the Temple, and to bring back the Jews to a correct knowledge of God. 'The kingdom of God is in you,' but they did not comprehend His meaning. They, blinded by ignorance, fanaticism, and bigotry, were looking for an earthly king. Jesus saw and knew that the Jewish kingdom, as such, was at an end. He did not worship in the Temple but little. He did not offer sacrifices. He did not flatter the priests. He had no orders or authority to teach, yet he taught. He forgave sins as did the priests, but in His own way. He was sharp in His rebukes of the Scribes and Pharisees, and made enemies. He recognized no master as a teacher. He called God, whom He worshipped, Father, instead of Jehovah as Moses did. He said the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath, which came in direct conflict with the Mosaic law. He healed the sick on the sabbath, another conflict with the Mosaic law. He said it was right to heal the sick on the sabbath. And, lastly, as a man, he made more enemies than friends, and eventually lost his life as a teacher and reformer, the great majority being against Him. The cross, the sword, the rack, the stake, the torture, etc., all proclaim human

nature, when the teachings do not please or suit the purposes of the great majority. The time will come when you mortals will cease to abuse me as you now do, and lay all of your own vile natures and doings on my shoulders, as if I carried the sins of the world about with me. You will see yourselves as God sees you, as I see you, and as you will see each other in your own true colors. You will give me a rest, so far as abuse is concerned, and take a proper view of life from your own passions, desires, and inclinations."

"Why!" exclaimed the Doctor, "you have read me a lecture, and have taken a look into the future. I am satisfied with the present."

"Yes," replied the Devil, "most mortals are, when they are bound down to some creed, dogma, or line of faith. Great truths grow slowly; the common mind is slow to think or reason clearly. Time is their great teacher. Jesus taught a great truth by calling God his Father, and not the bloodthirsty, jealous, and wrathful Jehovah of Moses and Samuel. He believed that all good and pious Jews were sons of God, as taught in the Old Testament; and so called Himself the Son of God, but more frequently the 'Son of man,' which meant a prophet and teacher. He never said, and you cannot find it in the New Testament, where He ever called Himself Jehovah, God, or the God of Israel, or where He ever said, 'I am the Lord thy God.' He claimed for Himself what Moses claimed for himself, and other prophets and teachers claimed. There was nothing new or original in such claims, and the Jews very well knew it."

"Then why did they seek his life?" asked the Doctor.

"Because He was teaching new ideas about God and the worship of God," replied the Devil. "He was seriously interfering with the priests' power and influence over the people. He was interfering with their money-making projects. He ignored confessions, sacrifices, and the strict letter of the Mosaic law. He had outgrown such things in thought. He was a development upon Moses. God was a Father; the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; it was lawful to heal the sick on that day; He did not believe in stoning women to death for adultery; He did not flatter rich men; He loved the poor; He was pure in heart and in action; He went about doing good and not talking good, for He was a man of action, and not of mere words. He had a supreme contempt for hypocrites in the Temple and out of it, and spoke bitterly sometimes to them, as you very well know, calling them 'hypocrites, whited sepulchres, ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?' Strong and pointed talk that, coming from a Nazarene, who was hated by the Jerusalem Jews. In a word, He was a bold and an original religious character, with the strongest kind of religious convictions; as much so as any man who ever developed or evolved new religious ideas and gave them to the world."

"And yet He was not God," asked the Doctor, "when He was called God by His disciples, and believed on as such?"

"Not exactly," said the Devil. "For if they believed Him to be God, why did John, who wrote of Him as the 'Word' who was made flesh—a title which Jesus never gave to Himself, or dreamed of, in my opinion—

forsake Him on the night of His arrest? Why did Peter deny Him? Why did Thomas doubt Him after His resurrection? Why did all of His disciples leave Him to His fate? None believed in His resurrection at first. A woman was the first to discover the fact that He had risen."

"They were spiritually blinded at the time; their eyes were not opened to see the truth, or to comprehend the words of Jesus," replied the Doctor.

"Not a bit of it," said the Devil. "They thought Him only a man like themselves. How could Judas have betrayed Him if He was God? Can you betray or take advantage of supreme knowledge? I do not know about their spiritual eyes being blind or shut; but I do know, that if Jesus was God, he could not have been betrayed by any mortal man, nor could He have suffered or died. I am not here to reconcile or explain away the contradictions in the New Testament about Him. I know that Jesus said He could do nothing of Himself. That He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. That He speaks nothing of Himself. 'Ye seek to kill me, a *man* that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God.' He speaks of the Father as 'my God and your God.' St. Paul, as you call him, is very plain, I think, as to who Jesus was. He said: 'The gift of grace is by *one man*, Jesus Christ. Then shall the Son himself be subject unto him, that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.' Paul, in defending himself against the Jews in Jerusalem, who charged him with worshipping Jesus as the Lord, said: 'After the way which

they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers.' St. Stephen, as you call him, calls Him 'a prophet like unto Moses.' Just what I have told you before, and I give you now your own boasted authority. But I am not here to argue with you as a Unitarian doctor of divinity. I merely quoted the above to show you that I knew what I was about when I approached Him in the wilderness and on the mountain. He was no more God than you are, but a great deal nearer to Him than you are; and fully comprehended Him, as a good, pious, loving, God-fearing Jew."

"Do you intend to try to convert me to the Unitarian faith, that old heresy which started with the Church?" asked the Doctor.

"Not at all," smilingly replied the Devil. "My object is to convert you so that you will cease to misrepresent me in the pulpit to your congregation. I want to convert you to the truth, the actual truth, about myself. I am discussing myself by discussing my actions; for by my actions you judge me."

"Very true," said the Doctor, "and by your actions you are the very essence of evil; the very Devil, walking up and down the earth, by your own confession."

"Just so," replied the Devil; "but please remember that I can do nothing without the permission of God, and He uses me to suit His purposes; but you, wiser than God, charge me, His instrument, as to thwarting His plans. Jesus certainly was used as a good instrument to teach a great and living truth to the ignorant Jews, who were on the lookout for a temporal Messiah of the house and seed of David. David's reign was the golden period of Jewish history. We are both servants

of God to do His will. I tempted Him, because it was so decreed by God. Did you ever think what Jesus thought of His mother and brethren as to His great mission?"

"Why, they believed in Him, of course, from the very first; honored and obeyed Him," replied the Doctor.

"Not a bit of it; you are very much mistaken in that assertion," replied the Devil. "Hear me. I read from John vii. 4: 'For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him.' He had been told by His brethren to go down to Jerusalem that His 'disciples also may see the works that thou doest.' When among His own people in Nazareth, He had done some things which astonished them, knowing Him as they did. They said: 'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.' But Jesus said, in reply to their personal knowledge of Him: 'A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.' Does that sound like the voice of a God, one who speaks with authority? It has, to my knowledge of you mortals, a good deal of your human nature in it. He called himself a prophet, and desired to be considered as such. He had the courage of His own convictions strong in Him. Then why should I, who am not omniscient, accord to Him the title of Lord, Jehovah, or God?"

"Well, He was God, because He did do great things, and astonished his neighbors, friends, and brethren," replied the Doctor. "I will so continue to believe, until

my eyes are opened in the spiritual world, and I shall see Him as He is."

"Very natural," said the Devil, "for you have been so educated to believe. But not so with those who walked, talked, and ate with Him, and who forsook Him in the hour of His greatest need, when a bold, manly, and fearless assertion on their part as to who He was, and what He taught, might have saved Him from the death of the cross. Bravery is many times an afterthought, while cowardice is ever present with you mortals; to take care of self is the first consideration. If Adam could have had a week's time to frame an excuse for himself, a far different answer, no doubt, he would have given. He would have been a sophist, or subtle liar, or something of that sort."

"Or something like yourself," put in the Doctor.

"Or something like yourself," smilingly replied the Devil, "when you get hold of knotty theological problems like the Trinity, Election and Predestination, Free Grace, Original Sin, the Blindness of the Jews, Eternal Punishment, Miracles, and, lastly, the Devil."

"Well, I see clearly now why you attempted to tempt Jesus," said the Doctor. "You thought Him a man like Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Samuel, David, Solomon, Job, Peter, and Paul, with their weak and strong points of character, and their frailties of human nature."

"Your mind is growing clear, I see," replied the Devil. "You have stated it exactly correct; and, as I was predestined to do exactly what I did, I carried out the mission intended me."

"Well," said the Doctor, "I want to put another question to you, and it is this——"

“Stop, if you please,” said the Devil. “We have had a long argument as to who was Jesus, and I must go. I will call soon again, and hear anything you may have to ask as to more light on His character. He was a wonderful man in His peculiar way. Good evening.” And with that the Devil disappeared under the Doctor’s chair ; so much so, that the Doctor raised the chair to look for him.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DOCTOR'S REFLECTIONS—THE DEVIL'S UNEXPECTED
ANSWER—EXPLAINS HIMSELF FULLY.

"WELL," said Dr. Devine to himself when seated in his chair in his study on Friday evening, "I have heard the expression, 'He is as plausible as the Devil,' and now I am satisfied that the Devil is no fool, and a sophist of extraordinary ability. He is as plausible in making evil appear good, as if it were a virtue to be evil; and to think of it! he says God is a party to his wrong doing. That God permits, suggests, and uses him for His own good purposes. Well, there is some plausibility in his last idea, for the Bible tells us that God did use the Assyrians, Egyptians, Babylonians, and the many tribes of Caanan, to punish the Jews when they sinned; and the Devil congratulates himself that God is honoring him by using him. Could I so think, I would cease to charge the Devil as the author of evil, but look upon him as a kind of sheriff to execute the sentence of the Judge, when he condemns a prisoner to be hung. The sheriff has no influence, nor a word to say, but to do his duty. The Devil is a plausible being, and if he could go into my pulpit and be seen by my congregation as I see him, and talk to them as he talks to me, he would create a revolution of thought which would upset all old theological

ideas so loved and preached. God would be feared, and not himself. God would be the Judge, the Devil the sheriff, and hell an eternal penitentiary. As principal keeper of hell, he would only execute the law upon the criminal as God directed.

“He, as a preacher, would deny his sin-making propensities, and make every individual a free agent, to sin or not to sin, to do good or not to do good, as he or she elected. Sin is so inviting. For what sin is there that has not pleasure in it? Something to cater to our natures, our passions, feelings, or desires. And those feelings are all pleasant; there is nothing repulsive in sin *per se*. When carried to excess in eating, drinking, lust, or any inordinate desire for power, position, wealth, etc., then, and then only, does sin become hurtful both to body and to mind; and we see the external influences in a diseased body or a distorted mind, in a conscience hardened to all good influences, and a total depravity of human nature.

“The Devil is a dangerous sophist and a plausible casuist. I should be afraid to trust my wife under his influence for an hour; for he would convince her that I was a fool. Bless her dear heart, she thinks there is not just such another man in the world as the Rev. Dr. David Devine. I am often amused sometimes with the emphasis she puts upon ‘the Doctor’ in her conversations, as if my words and ideas were infallible. The Pope has no child of his faith that believes stronger in him than my wife does in me.

“But as to the Devil. Why should he want Jesus to turn stones into bread, or why did his supreme and audacious impudence ask our blessed Saviour to worship him? There, again, we have an old and pointed expres-

sion : 'As impudent as the Devil.' He certainly has been seen in the world by others besides myself."

"Certainly I have; and for two very good reasons in answer to your questions."

At the sound of a voice so near him, the Doctor sprang from his seat, and, looking around, there sat the Devil, in a suit perfectly blue.

"When did you come?" asked the Doctor. "I did not hear you enter. I see you have changed your suit."

"I presume you did not hear me," replied the Devil. "I have the happy faculty of coming and going in and among you mortals at any time, and at my own pleasure. I often enjoy the talks you mortals have with each other, and with your own self; for your thoughts are but silent conversations between the outward and inward man. You have two natures, as you very well know: a carnal and a spiritual, as you express it in the pulpit; or, as I would put it, 'a good and an evil nature,' or having at the same time God and the Devil in you. As you mortals cultivate those natures, they grow strong and predominant by such cultivation. The blacksmith cultivates the muscles of his arms at the expense of his legs. The ploughman move his legs. For you know that as you cultivate some muscles of the body, you do it at the expense of others; and so with your social, intellectual, and religious natures. To cultivate a high moral nature, you do so at the expense of a lustful nature; you simply subdue it. To cultivate a high intellectual nature, you do so at the expense of faith; for to think is to doubt, to question. As you cultivate a too highly religious nature, you do it at the expense of clear reason, sound logic, and facts, and run into a kind of religious

enthusiasm—blind faith, I call it. One prays where he should work ; he relies too much on what he calls Providence, when he should rely upon himself ; he has faith where he should have reason ; he has passive resignation where he should have indomitable energy. But ask me what you want to know more about Jesus and my temptation of Him. The reason I am dressed in blue is because I have just come from a region of blue flames, generally known as hell-fire.”

“ Well, to begin,” remarked the Doctor, “ why did you want Jesus to turn stones into bread ? ”

“ Simple enough,” answered the Devil. “ He was hungry after a forty days’ fast, and when a mortal is hungry unto starvation, he will do anything to feed himself. I wanted to see a real miracle worked by Him if He was God, or begotten of God, or sent by God to declare the power of God to do such things. You mortals enjoy ocular demonstrations ; so do I sometimes, and that was one of the times. A miracle for my benefit would have ended my ideas about Him. I would have known that there was some sort of divinity in Him beyond other mortals. If he got it from God, He then was a divine teacher sent by God. That He did not really have the seed of David or any other mortal man’s seed in Him, and that He was a creation of God, and not of man.”

“ Yes,” replied the Doctor, “ an incarnation of God, from God, and very God.”

“ Very well,” said the Devil. “ You are entitled to your views on that point. But really, I do not feel like discussing that question with you. I will send, in my way, a Unitarian divine, a very D.D. like yourself, and you can torture scripture to suit yourselves.”

"Excuse me for interrupting you," said the Doctor. "I could make nothing out of a discussion of that sort, nor could he convince me to his way of thinking."

"Just what I knew," replied the Devil. "When you mortals get a fixed idea in your heads, become wedded to it, in love with it as a mother for a deformed child, wrapped up in it, revel in mystery as an argument which cannot be demonstrated, or is demonstrable, you feel at home. The dim mysteries of the long past are as clear to your minds as the sun is to a mole's eye two feet under ground. Miracles in the days of Jesus, and long before Him, were very common affairs. The Bible is full of them. I wanted to see one that had in itself no law in nature, and that which was thoroughly beyond nature, and supernatural, and could only come from the will of God directly, and for a direct purpose. Turning a stone into bread was such a miracle."

"Yes," exclaimed the Doctor, "and Jesus did not gratify your impudent curiosity."

"Precisely," smiled the Devil; "but He quoted scripture why He should not work a miracle. The Son of God in my opinion was above, or should be above, what 'is written;' for He ranked, or was above, all law, written or unwritten; and I was not satisfied by any means with his answer, for I did not think it worthy of God, or a Son of God as you claim Him to be."

"But you were not to be a judge in such matters, and it was a piece of bold audacity on your part thus to tempt Him," replied the Doctor.

"How so?" replied the Devil. "When I was after finding out a great truth I was sent to tempt Him, and was doing my duty to the best of my ability."

"All stuff you are talking to me," said the Doctor ;
"but proceed with your sophistry."

"I then took Him to Jerusalem. I need not explain to you, a mortal, how I did it; but I did it. You see the power given me by God, and I 'set Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee.' You see I met Him by quoting scripture myself, and to let Him know that I was not ignorant of 'what was written.' But Jesus quoted scripture again, for He said: 'It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' If He was God, how could I tempt Him? I took Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. See the power God gave me. And so I said: 'All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.' He met me again by quoting scripture: 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.' He first said: 'Get thee behind me, Satan.'"

"So you see He knew and rebuked you," said the Doctor, "and told you who men should worship."

"Precisely," replied the Devil; "and He, quoting scripture, said: 'It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.' If He was God, there was no necessity of quoting scripture. Again, if He was God, could I have carried Him from pinnacle to mountain? Could I tell him a lie to His very face, when I told Him the power was given to me to give away kingdoms? What an opportunity to have

called me a liar to my face! and what could I have said in my defence? But not a word about my lying or misstating the plain truth, but only posting me as to what 'is written.' I knew what was written, but I was tempting a faithful and pious Son of God, as He afterwards called himself, and as all good pious Jews called themselves; though he never called himself the Son of God a half dozen times, but the 'Son of man' over sixty times. What He was called by those who wrote about Him, or spoke to Him while among them, even to crazy men, said to be possessed with my spirit, was what they believed, or their idea of him. Just as you now believe of Him. Belief, remember, and faith, also remember, are not actual facts. Put your finger on the verse where he ever said positively He was God, or the God of Israel, which expression you will find all through the Old Testament."

"I don't admit or subscribe to your logic or reasoning," said the Doctor. "But tell me why you wanted Jesus to worship you. You were after a miracle about turning stones into bread. Now your reason for a desire to be worshipped."

"Simply an experiment of mine," replied the Devil. "I know human nature far better than you do. I know all the weak and strong points in every individual mortal. Mortals will worship something, God or mammon; will worship themselves or some one else; will worship this world and the things in it by their actions; will worship their own importance, and think others ought to do it. Some of the Eastern monarchs of old called themselves gods, and demanded worship. Some of the Roman emperors claimed for themselves divine honors.

Alexander said he was the son of Zeus, but his mother had the good sense to laugh at such a claim, and said he was after getting her in trouble with Hera, the wife of Zeus. You mortals will worship power, glory, honors, riches, and do almost anything to get them. The vanity of the human heart is great, very great, absurdly great in many instances. As Jesus was nothing but a man as I viewed Him, I tempted Him as such; for if He loved power, glory, riches, or earthly honors, He would worship the *one* able to give them to Him. You mortals pay well for great gifts or honors many times. You pay for it by the sacrifice of your personal characters for truth, for honor, for integrity, for virtue, for self-respect. Anything to obtain the desires of the heart. But Jesus was not that kind of a man, for He had a most supreme contempt for power, glory, riches, place, or admiration. He was simply a teacher of righteousness, of charity, of brotherly love; a first consideration for the poor, for He was poor Himself, and had a fellow feeling for those who had a hard struggle in life. He was pure in person and mind—remarkably so; so much so, that if your father had embraced His ideas about marriage, you would not be here to-night, talking to me about the character of Jesus. He also had rather a contempt for the old Jewish rites and ceremonies in the Temple, which put much money in the pockets of the priests; hence the priests hated Him, and you know the result of that hate. Caiaphas, the high priest, could tell you all about it if he were here to-night. I now have him in my keeping, not so much for being a bad or wicked man, but for being a false witness—a kind of perjurer—who kept back some facts that he should have stated to Pilate. He sup-

pressed the whole truth, and told only part of it ; enough to deceive and mislead. Just as you, and thousands like you, do in the pulpit, when you try to bolster up your rotten creeds, dogmas, and confessions of faith, by saying: 'Thus saith the Church ; thus saith our creed.' Just as many of you mortals in court tell a part of the truth, but make it convenient to 'forget,' 'don't exactly remember,' when you should remember. Such characters will be and are sent to me by the great Judge ; they then remember very well. I have something of a faculty to make them not to 'forget.' "

"Glad to hear that," put in the Doctor. "Memory and conscience are then at work, are they ? "

"Precisely," replied the Devil. "I have Pilate with me also, and he now sees what a great mistake he made."

"So glad to hear it, so glad !" exclaimed the Doctor. "Tell me all about it."

"Pilate was not sent to hell by God," said the Devil, "for not believing in the Jewish Jehovah, or because he was not a Jew. He was sent there because he did not hold the scales of justice as he should have done. As one having the power of life and death in his hands, he should have had the disciples of Jesus arrested and brought before him. He should have made them testify, with the assurance that they would and should not be harmed by the priests. That they would not be put on trial ; but to tell the truth as to what Jesus taught and told them was His object in teaching as He did. Their evidence would have freed Jesus, for Pilate said himself that he found no fault in the man. Pilate was recreant to his duty, and attempted to please the great majority, without considering the ends of justice. He

it was who crucified Jesus; not the Jews, as you preach. He failed of his duty for popularity's sake; and God has so judged him. God did not wash his hands when He put Pilate on trial, and sent him to me to be punished. Pilate has a plenty of companions to keep him company. God does not take cognizance of a mortal's religion, belief, or creed. He does not care if He is worshipped as Jehovah, Jupiter, or Baal. He demands that mortals shall be just and true in their actions towards each other. To live up to all the light they have, whether it be the bright light of the sun, or a tallow candle. Do you understand? Jesus called God, Father, and lived and acted as a son of God; God was His spiritual Father, and He, His spiritual son. Any inconsistency or faulty reasoning in that? In a word, Jesus taught the religion of humanity, and brotherhood of mankind. Something the old Jew did not teach; and great faith in God."

"No, none, if your position is correct; and I admit your premises," said the Doctor.

"Now," said the Devil, "all that I did in the wilderness, on the pinnacle, and on the mountain, was to test Jesus just as I tested Job and Eve. I simply failed with Jesus as I did with Job, and with every other good and true man whom God feels disposed to test for His own wise purposes. It is none of my business to catechise God as to why He uses me. I have failed with thousands of good men and women, and have won my case with thousands of others. You will know all about it some of these days, when God will reveal Himself to you mortals. You will never know it in this world. You can no more comprehend the ways of God to you mortals

than your little three-year-old boy, sleeping in his bed, can comprehend one of your sermons. He will simply know that you are saying something, but will not understand you. You know that God is doing something, but you do not understand Him."

"But I think I understand Jesus and comprehend Him," replied the Doctor.

"In a limited sense you may, if you do not make a God of Him," said the Devil. "If He was God, you cannot imitate or be like Him. He was not a pattern for any mortal; for if He was more than man, then it is all nonsense for you to hold Him up in the pulpit before your congregation as an ensample or example. God might as well have sent the archangel Gabriel to you mortals and exclaimed: 'Behold! I send you an exemplar!' If Jesus was divinely begotten, then He had an earthly mother, but no earthly father; and you are just running into heathen my——"

"Stop! stop!" exclaimed the Doctor. "That is just what I do believe. Jesus had no earthly father, but an earthly mother."

"Preach such an absurdity, and, to my knowledge, you will in time preach the real thinking minds of your church into either atheism, rationalism, infidelity, or scepticism; and in the near future you will hear something about agnosticism, theosophy, spiritualism, and every kind of *ism* imaginable, except pure monotheism. The Jew is not as far from God as you imagine. His spiritual eyesight is very clear; but really it is beyond his comprehension to comprehend your three Gods in one, or your God-man. There is a little too much of the Greek and Alexandrian school of philosophy in it to sit pleas-

antly upon his mental stomach for digestion, if you will allow me a figure of speech."

"Do you intend to try to convert me to the old Judaical faith of three thousand years ago?" asked the Doctor.

"Not exactly," replied the Devil, "for the Jews of to-day have outgrown much of that. They hold on to a few of their old rites and ceremonies, feast and fast days. Outside of that, they are very sensible and progressive in thought. They have learnt much within the last two thousand years, and will learn much more as a religious people in the next two thousand years. As for you Christians, your present teachings will be literary curiosities; the world then will be astonished at your great ignorance. In your theological seminaries of to-day, the greatest absurdities, contradictions, inconsistencies, clashing of facts, marvellous assertions, astonishing dogmas, absurd theories, wonderful creeds, a blind faith in a church or churches engineered by priests, preachers, popes, parsons, pastors, and public exhorters; each and every one actuated by a blind zeal for their peculiar teachings, claiming for themselves almost divine inspiration, are swallowed down as easy of belief as a child draws milk from its mother's breast."

"You make some very bold assertions, yourself," replied the Doctor.

"Only the boldness of truth, fact, and plain reason, with some knowledge of the future. One thousand years hence I will be talking with a V. L. E. D. I., who will see the Bible in a very different light from what you do at this time. I will have but one trouble with him."

"In the name of common sense," exclaimed the Doctor, "what will that trouble be?"

"He will preach God as the very essence of love. A love boundless in mercy and forgiveness. A love so great that none will ever be sent to hell and to me. A love which will commission angels to be sent as teachers to you mortals, so that you will be saved against your own wills. They will have the tongues of angels to persuade men. He will think that the time is near, for Paul talked about an angel from heaven preaching some sort of gospel. That Jesus will preach again to 'spirits in prison,' and that eventually I shall be saved.

"Gracious me!" exclaimed the Doctor. "'A God all mercy is a God unjust,' it strikes me. Somebody ought to be damned, to show the justice of God. He damned you, and you are making devils of men on earth. Oh! I believe strongly in damnation and a plenty of it, when it is deserved. I don't want everybody in heaven, for then it would be no heaven to me."

"Perhaps not," smilingly remarked the Devil; "but you seem to enjoy this world very well with all the rascals, liars, thieves, and murderers in it. They don't seem to give you any special uneasiness, nor interfere with your digestion. Your mind is very serene so long as they steer clear of your house and church. But we will not talk about what will be preached a thousand years from now. You have read the so-called old Fathers of the Church. Do you indorse all their superstitious nonsense, creeds, dogmas, and bigotry?"

"Not a bit of it," said the Doctor.

"Nor will those who will walk the earth a thousand years hence indorse all of your nonsense."

"How you do talk and prophesy!" said the Doctor. "But to go back from where we left off about Jesus. You were then only acting under the direct influence of God in your temptation of Jesus?"

"Correct," replied the Devil. "If I know myself, and I think I do, and if I know God's intentions towards you mortals, and I think I do, I am His instrument to test mankind when He so determines to use me. Why, even some of you mortals in the past have said that they could use me at their pleasure to accomplish their ends. I am a very accommodating personage or spirit with some, if they are to be believed, as you will find out before I am done vindicating myself, or making my own defence against your many charges."

"Yes," replied the Doctor; "and if you could be seen and heard in my pulpit for an hour, you would undo all that it has taken me ten years to accomplish in the way of belief and faith among my people. You are a very sophist, casuist, and remarkably plausible with the unthinking and unlearned. I see through you."

"Why is it, then," asked the Devil, "that you divines do not seek, court, and demand arguments if the truths, the great truths, of the Bible are so plain, so easily understood, so easily comprehended, so easily explained, 'though a man be a fool he need not err therein,' so thoroughly consistent in every statement of fact, so self-evident as to truth, that you do not invite discussion with atheists, infidels, rationalists, doubters, sceptics, and all those honest minds, honest with themselves, and honest towards God, who cannot reconcile many statements in the Bible as true in fact or sound in reason? They do not want to hear a word about faith, but honest facts

interpreted, and so interpreted as to reach their reason and convince their minds. But you shrink from the mental conflict, and say it will do no good, and give a hundred excuses, when you should be bold, defiant, aggressive, and advancing. But like the high land ter-rapin, you D.D.s and others draw yourselves into your theological shells, and are kicked about with amusement by scientists, rationalists, infidels, and sceptics, and you call it a sort of meekness and pity for the poor fools. It is only amid the conflict of thought, the clash of reason, the strength of logic, the clear statement of facts, that truth, real defiant truth, rises to the surface with a smiling face, says, 'I am here to stay.' But when truth seeks shelter from a conflict with falsehood, she compromises herself and her followers. Truth, when struck in the face, should knock down the aggressor; then she will be feared as God should be feared. Good evening. I will call soon again, and enter upon the discussions of other points relative to myself." With that, the Devil disappeared through the ceiling overhead.

CHAPTER XIII.

A SURPRISE VISIT—DISCUSSION ON DAVID AND PETER.

THE next evening the Doctor was, as usual, in his study, and thinking over his discussion with the Devil on the character of Jesus. He was troubled in mind, not to say vexed with the Devil.

“Well, well,” said the Doctor, “he gets worse and worse. He is frank, open, bold, and strong; but he will not admit that I have read his character aright, or that his intentions are evil. God is the great mover or exciting cause of all of his actions, if he is to be believed. He readily admitted that curiosity prompted him to test Eve, as a new creation he did not understand; and not being omniscient, there was some plausibility in his assertion, and he did what he did of his own volition. But as to Job and Jesus, he was only an instrument used. But I am not through with him yet by a long ways; the Bible is full of his iniquitous acts and doings, and I know he cannot explain all away as satisfactorily as he thinks he has done so far. He is unquestionably a great rascal, humanly speaking, though he wants to pass himself off as a mere tool in the hands of God. The next thing that he will be claiming for himself will be, that he is a real good to the world, a very saint. The audacious

rascal—for I must speak of him as a man, for I see him as such—will not hesitate to——”

“Stop, Doctor, stop,” said a voice in a chair near him. “I am no saint, and never made any pretensions that way, as you mortals do. True, I was once the brightest of the archangels, but I fell from grace, the honor and love of God.”

The Doctor sprang from his chair as if an electric shock had gone through him; and, looking, saw the Devil, with a pleasant smile on his wonderfully handsome face, dressed in a full suit of red.

“How you astonish me!” exclaimed the Doctor, as soon as he could catch his breath. “And what a red suit you have on!”

“Yes,” responded the Devil. “I am just from among the bloody murderers of battle-fields, who kill each other for honor, glory, or gain, but mostly for gain, and murderers of every hue and degree. God sent them to me to teach them that murderers are not wanted in heaven just now. A great many mortals, when they have a rope around their necks, tell you they are going straight to heaven. You preachers are doing a great deal of harm by filling the minds of murderers about to be hung, that God is really ready, anxious, and impatient to receive them, and that they can help themselves to a golden harp and crown as soon as their necks are broken. The way to stop all manner of crime, is to fill the heart and mind with fear, and execute violated law quickly. As you preach ‘the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom,’ so the fear of law is also the beginning of wisdom. Stop your nonsense about making such a parade over murderers about to be hung. As they sent their

brother mortal into eternity and to God without a moment's warning, give them some of their own physic, and you will work a mighty reform in your whole land."

"Something in that," replied the Doctor.

"A good deal, and all in that," said the Devil. "Wisdom says, 'It is far better and cheaper to prevent crime than to punish it;' and you mortals will learn that lesson in the next one hundred years."

"Hope so," said the Doctor. "But I was thinking, just before you came so suddenly upon me, something about David, that man after God's own heart."

"Proceed," said the Devil. "I am all attention."

"Well, to begin," said the Doctor. "I see in 1 Chron. xxi. 1: 'And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.' Now, what have you to say to that? You are now after David."

"Did the writer of Chronicles see me, or did I take him into my confidence?" asked the Devil. "David was emphatically a fighting man, ever at war, and it was natural that he should like to know the number of fighting men he had in his kingdom. He found out in a very sensible way, by taking a census. For it is stated, there were 'one million four hundred and seventy thousand men who drew the sword.' I see no harm in that; but it is stated that God was displeased at the thing, and smote Israel. But hear David. He did not say that I had anything to do with his act, and he told the truth. 'And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.' Not one word about my tempting him, but like an honest, straightforward,

truthful man, he takes the whole sin on his own shoulders. To be honest with you, and to the point, it is a lie to say I tempted him; nor do I care who the writer was who so wrote. David was anxious for war, glory, and spoils. If he did not say it in so many words, he believed to the 'victor belonged the spoils,' and he got them; for woe to the vanquished when he was about. The Jews were by no means backward in helping themselves to the spoils of war. Just like some after David—Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, and hundreds of other military chieftains who live in history—and who stole, robbed, and murdered upon the plea of necessity, when cupidity and avariciousness were the mighty incentives. David was both a fighting man from necessity and gain. Solomon, his son, was of a different character and disposition. He was fond of ease, luxury, wine, and women, and given to a sort of literary taste."

"But God did punish him, nevertheless," replied the Doctor.

"Yes," replied the Devil; "but He did not use me on that occasion."

"How so?" asked the Doctor.

"I read, verse 15: 'And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the Lord beheld, and he repented Him of the evil; and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand.' You see that God had no need of my services just then, for, if He had, I might have made quick work of Jerusalem. You further see, and don't forget it, that God uses His own angels sometimes to carry out His purposes, and gives me a rest now and then."

"You are very impudent and presumptuous to talk that way," put in the Doctor.

"My nature is to be honest and frank with you mortals," replied the Devil. "But I read again, verse 16: 'David saw the angel having a drawn sword in his hand;' and hear David again, in verse 17: 'Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed.' Not one word about being tempted by me; no putting his sin on any one but himself. There is character, manliness, courage, principle, for you mortals to imitate. He was a pattern when principle was concerned. You mortals can imitate him if you will."

"So you had nothing to do with it, then?" asked the Doctor.

"Certainly not," replied the Devil. "No more than I had to do with his seduction of Bathsheba, or the killing of Uriah. David's strong passions were the devil in him on that occasion, not I, I can truthfully assure you. His desire for a pretty woman was the temptation or tempter, that outranks me nine times out of ten on every occasion of that sort. God created you with strong passions; and with those devils in you, you have enough of evil to contend with without any voluntary aid on my part to induce you to sin. I do not trouble such men or women, for their passions will do the work well for them. I am very quiet on such occasions of temptation. Perhaps I may explain to you, some future evening, more fully, David's sin on that occasion, and justify his act in having Uriah killed."

"What is that you say?" exclaimed the Doctor. "Goodness gracious me! What under heaven in the way

of sin won't you attempt to justify? But I want to talk just now about another character that you made to sin, or wanted him to sin. You are always after good men to make them sin."

"Proceed with your charges," said the Devil.

"Your plausible sophistry about David's sin in numbering Israel, I will let go. But how about your desire to sift St. Peter? and you know it was only through the prayers of our blessed Saviour he was saved from your clutches," said the Doctor. "Let me read from this Bible, Luke xxii. 31: 'Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' Now what did you want to sift Simon, or Peter, as he is called, for, but to tempt him to forsake his Lord and Master?"

"Well," said the Devil, "in reply to that, I have this to say: If I wanted him, I certainly had him as long as I wanted him. For he certainly lied, and swore that he did not know Jesus. I sifted him as to his moral and physical courage on that occasion, and he proved wanting in both. Jesus knew that he was wanting in courage, especially moral courage, and told him, when he was converted, to strengthen his brethren; or, in other words, when he had cultivated a bold moral courage, then try to instill it in others. For he tells him in the same breath, 'I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, even in this night, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.' On that peculiar occasion there was then in Peter's physical and moral nature the devil of cowardice, and Jesus knew it; He knew it from close association with him. The other disciples made no boast as to what they would do if He was arrested. Satan

there means cowardice, not me ; and if it did mean me, I carried my point, and did Peter great good in the end, as you will admit ; for he did grow in all courage. I showed him what a miserable coward he was, made him ashamed of himself, and his tears of repentance made of him a bold man in after life. So I did not follow him up after that occasion."

"But he thinks you did," replied the Doctor, "for he says in 1 Pet. v. 8: 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.'"

"Precisely," replied the Devil. "Peter was ever conscious of his own weaknesses, and cowardly denial of Jesus, and his duplicity with Paul; and hence he was ready to give good advice from a sad experience. Unlike David, he wanted to make a scapegoat of and put his frailties upon me. All cowards do that: brave men never. He feels under obligations to me, if he but knew it. Do you not know from observation, if not personal experience, that men are made better by temptation? That they grow strong by resistance, or weak and spiritless by yielding? Peter was exactly such a case; temptation did him good, and he now thanks me for it, where he is."

"I never thought of it in that light," replied the Doctor.

"What other points do you want light upon?" asked the Devil.

"What have you to say to the words of Jesus when talking to the Jews about His mission?" asked the Doctor. "I read, John viii. 44: 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He

was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own : for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

“That,” said the Devil, “is all allegorical or parabolical, a favorite mode of teaching with Jesus. It took with the people; it was original, to say the least of it. The Jews were no more the children of the ‘Devil,’ than He was the divinely begotten ‘Son of God.’ I am not aware of the fact that I ever begot a child of any sort. I know nothing of human passions; I was not created that way. Neither does God, directly or indirectly, know anything of begetting. Jesus was having a controversy with the Jews as to His belief and teachings. The Jews charged Jesus as being born of fornication, and said, in verse 41 : ‘We have one Father, even God.’ You see that the Jews called themselves sons of God. Jesus said : ‘If God were your Father, ye would love me : for I proceeded forth and came from God ; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.’ Right there Jesus denies He is God, but a servant sent. Both Jews and Jesus claimed God as their Father ; but Jesus, in rather a bold and frank way, gave them to understand they were liars, and called them the children of the Devil. Not mine, I can assure you, Doctor. Do not mix allegory and parable with facts. Tell the honest truth in the pulpit. If your congregation cannot stand the honest truth, tell them, as an upright man, with plenty of self-respect, to look out for another teacher. I never was a murderer, and, if so, whom did I kill ? If I am a liar, to whom did I lie ? I certainly cannot lie to God, and there is no necessity to lie to men or mortals. Their evil passions

uncontrolled, lead them without my assistance. I cannot discuss all the allegorical and parabolical allusions to myself in the Bible. It would be only a waste of time and words. Moses knew nothing of me as Satan or the Devil. David and Solomon were ignorant of my existence and influence. As Devil, in the Old Testament I am not known; but devils are used as sacrificing to devils in Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Chronicles, and Psalms; for you should know, if you do not, that the Jews had a very fanciful way of calling the gods of other nations, devils. Beelzebub, the Prince of Devils, as mentioned in the New Testament, and which the Jews charged Jesus with casting out devils by Beelzebub, was the god of Ekron, in Samaria. Ahaziah, King of Israel in Samaria, sent to inquire of Beelzebub, or Baalzebub, god of Ekron, whether he would get well of a fall that he had. Really, then, Beelzebub was a heathen god which, at one time, the Jews worshipped; but, after they ceased to worship him, complimented or converted him into the 'Prince of Devils.'"

"You are somewhat historical in your information," put in the Doctor.

"Certainly," replied the Devil; "to enlighten your mind, so that you may be able to enlighten the minds of your fashionable congregation. In the New Testament I am a very conspicuous and important character, as much so as I am now in all the sermons preached, yours included; for without me you would have a very poor religion, and nothing with which to alarm your congregation—for hell, the Devil, and damnation constitute the best part of some ministers' sermons, yours not excepted. There was a hell before a plan of salvation."

"You are somewhat personal," put in the Doctor.

"No more than the honest truth demands," rejoined the Devil.

"Well, you are conspicuous; rather too much so for the good of the world," said the Doctor.

"As you very well know, but are afraid to preach it," said the Devil, "I am a borrowed character from Persia and Babylon, where the Jews spent nearly seventy years in captivity. They picked up a great many theological ideas from the Persians, such as paradise, angels, devils, etc."

"Well, you are like an eel," said the Doctor, "and you will slip out of all difficulties; and there is no holding you unless your head is badly bruised."

"That is so," replied the Devil. "Truth cannot be held down or made a plaything of. It will assert itself, and I have been talking honest truth because I have no ends to subserve. I am not a creed maker, a dogma expounder, or a paid minister, to hold up their side of the house of faith at so much per year. Facts are facts; truths are truths; for a fact is that which cannot be denied or disputed."

"Well, it is a fact that you had something to do with Judas Iscariot," said the Doctor, "and I want you to explain away the villainy of Judas' betrayal of Jesus."

"Excuse me for this evening," said the Devil. "I must go below and see how criminals against God's law are being punished. It is an interesting subject, and I will give you some new points. You ministers have taken a wrong view of Judas. Good evening," and the Devil leaped out of the window.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DEVIL SAYS JUDAS ISCARIOT TEMPTED, BUT DID NOT BETRAY JESUS—REVEALS HIS TRUE CHARACTER AND MOTIVES.

ON Sunday the Doctor had preached upon "The love of money is the root of all evil," 1 Tim. vi. 10. "It was the love of money that Jesus preached against," said the Doctor. "When He said that it was easier for the camel to go through the needle's eye, a small gate or gates in the city of Jerusalem, He did not intend to convey so strong a meaning as to say all rich men, like Dives, were in hell. It was the excessive love of it, which made it an evil, or, I may say, a devil of him. Now, brethren, when a rich man dies, and remembers the church, theological colleges, poor ministers, asylums of all sorts and kinds, young men's Christian associations, foreign missions, domestic missions, etc., God will remember him; for, as we are taught in this Holy Book, charity covers a multitude of sins. The saddest case in all history, my brethren, of the love of money, is found in this Bible—the betrayal by Judas of his Lord and Master, his Saviour and Redeemer. Sad case, indeed! And where is Judas to-day? We are told that he has gone to his own place, and we can very well conjecture where that place is, and who is the Prince of Darkness

there. The love of money sent Judas to hell, my brethren. Our Saviour was very strong and suggestive in his parables about rich men; but remember they were parables, and would not, perhaps, fit in well, or suit this age. Riches are needful and useful when properly enjoyed. The world is better off for rich men; but not like men such as Judas, who sold honor and trust. Get wealth; but use it wisely, use it charitably, and God will bless you in the other world, as He has done in this. But do not let the Devil get into your hearts as he did that of Judas; for then there is no telling what one will do to get rich."

We cannot follow the Doctor through his sermon. The rich men and women of his congregation were not at all disturbed in their minds for being rich.

It was Monday evening, and the Doctor was in his study, enjoying a cigar, and at the same time thinking—thinking about Judas and the Devil. "I do want to see the Devil and hear his explanation why he got into the heart of Judas to do such an infamous act as to betray his Saviour. It is without excuse or palliation. But I know very well from his past talks that he will be full, very full of sophistry and plausibility. I would not be at all surprised to hear him say that Jesus himself prompted Judas to betray Him. He may go so far as to say that God had something to do with it. But I want to hear him."

"Here I am, at your service, Doctor," said a voice in a chair near by.

The Doctor let drop his cigar, sprang from the chair, and exclaimed: "Gracious! How you did frighten me!" as he saw the Devil smiling at his surprise.

"So you are thinking of Judas, are you?" asked the Devil, "and my getting into his heart, or putting it into his heart, to betray Jesus. Poor mortal! A self-deceived and imposed-upon mortal," said the Devil.

"There it is, to begin with!" exclaimed the Doctor. "Judas is a poor, ignorant, deceived man in your opinion, from what you have already said."

"I think I can prove it," said the Devil, "as we warm to the discussion of the betrayal of Jesus."

"Well, proceed," said the Doctor.

"To begin with," replied the Devil, "I want to know who Jesus was, in your opinion, on that occasion. We have discussed His character before, I am aware; and that was in the beginning of his ministry. We now come to the closing of it; the grand drama in it; for He had said much and done much since I had Him in the wilderness, on the pinnacle, and on the mountain. He had then worked no miracles, though I was very anxious to see Him do one in my sight—the turning of stones into bread. That was something outside of all nature; the raising of a dead man only four days dead would not be a circumstance to it. I know something of suspended animation, and the burying of people in a trance, thinking them dead. Those old Jews were not remarkable for their medical or scientific knowledge, they were too full of superstition."

"As I said then, and say now, Jesus was God manifested in the flesh, and His wonderful miracles proclaimed Him to be the eternal Son of God, the equal with the Father, and the 'Word' as St. John wrote," replied the Doctor, with emphasis.

"Glad, very glad," said the Devil, "you are so ex-

plicit in your answer. Now for a few running questions and answers. I don't want you to claim surprise, as lawyers in your courts do sometimes. My questions will be very direct, and let your answers be short and to the point."

"Proceed," said the Doctor; "but no tricks in your questions, as when you asked me why God did not annihilate you."

"I am above such things," said the Devil; "and besides, you could not answer me, and you cannot now. Well, to begin. I ask, you answer. Jesus called Judas to His ministry, did he not?"

"Yes," answered the Doctor.

"Judas did not ask to be called, did he?"

"I think not," said the Doctor.

"Jesus was God, was He not?"

"Certainly," replied the Doctor.

"He, as God, knew Judas's character, did He not?"

"Certainly," replied the Doctor.

"Judas was with Jesus some three years as a disciple, was he not?"

"Yes, according to the record," replied the Doctor.

"He heard Him teach, call Himself the Son of God and the Son of man, did he not?"

"Certainly," replied the Doctor.

"He saw all the miracles Jesus wrought, did he not?"

"I think so," replied the Doctor.

"Could Judas think Him mortal man, or that he could do what He did, unless God was with Him?"

"Certainly not," said the Doctor.

"Then Judas must have believed that Jesus had

supernatural power, either as God, or given Him by God?"

"Certainly, certainly," said the Doctor.

"Then," said the Devil, rising from his chair, "Judas could not have possibly betrayed Jesus if He was God, or sustained by the power of God."

"Stop! stop!" exclaimed the Doctor. "You must remember that He came to suffer and to die, to fulfil the law of God."

"Hold!" said the Devil. "No such absurd contradictions with me. If Jesus was God, there was no law binding on Him, either in heaven, earth, or hell. He was in Himself all law. I don't want any of your incomprehensible, undefinable, inconceivable, inexplicable contradictions hurled at me—your wheel-within-a-wheel sort of reasoning, wherein I am deeply interested, because my character is at stake. You are not now talking to an unthinking congregation."

"Well, you see," said the Doctor, "great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. So says Paul."

"I am not arguing with a mortal who lived near two thousand years ago, but with you," said the Devil. "Jesus knew what He was about when He chose Judas. I read, John vi. 70: 'Jesus answered them, Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?' It looks to me that Jesus was going to use Judas for some purpose, for He could have easily given him his walking papers as a disciple. Look out, Judas may yet be betrayed, and not the betrayer."

"You astonish me by such absurd assertions," said the Doctor.

"I will astonish you more before I get through," said the Devil. "In the Bible story of the betrayal, I read, Luke xxii. 3: 'Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Jesus unto them.'"

"What do you have to say to that?" asked the Doctor. "There you are mentioned by name."

"Very good," replied the Devil. "I read, John xiii. 27: 'And after the sop Satan entered into Judas. Then said Jesus unto him, *That thou doest, do quickly.* Now, no man at the table knew for what intent He spoke this unto him.' See you, Jesus being God, as you say, knew all about the thoughts of Judas, but the rest did not. The disciples could have been easily betrayed, but not Jesus. When you know a thing you cannot be betrayed. If you knew there was a warrant out for you and the officer was coming, you could get out of the way, could you not? Jesus could have hid out as soon as Judas left. But, mark you, He tells him, '*That thou doest, do quickly;*' satisfying the mind of poor Judas that He was really God; or had the power of God in Him. If Jesus did not wish to be arrested, why did He not stop Judas? also tell the rest of the disciples the intention of Judas, explain to them what was about to happen to Him, put them on their guard and on notice? Why did He not do it?"

"How you do talk!" exclaimed the Doctor. "Jesus said He was betrayed, and did He lie about it?"

"By no means," replied the Devil, "if He were God.

Or, even if He were a man, if He knew a thing before it happened. To be forewarned, as you know, is to be fore-armed. Betrayal means taking advantage of confidence, to violate, to deceive, and impose upon. Judas did none of those things, for Jesus knew all, and so told him. Judas understood Jesus, but not the others."

"But he did betray Him," put in the Doctor, "for Jesus was arrested after Judas gave the kiss as a sign. Was not the kiss a betrayal?"

"Not at all," replied the Devil, "for I now shall pile facts upon facts to show you that the whole thing was predestinated, as Calvinists would argue. Your plan of salvation was to be worked out, as you insist."

"How so?" asked the Doctor.

"I read," said the Devil, "from John xiii. 31: 'Therefore, when he was gone out [Judas], Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.' Jesus was anxious for the betrayal, for the Son of man and God was going to be glorified. No betrayal there. God was to be glorified, and Jesus knew it. He made no attempt at escape, nor did He advise His disciples to run away. Peter, you know, had a sword, and tried to make a show of defence; when Jesus told him to put it up, and worked a miracle, as you would say, by healing the servant's ear in the twinkling of an eye. There are no little and big miracles in nature, any more than there are little and big facts. A fact is a fact."

"But you did enter Judas," put in the Doctor.

"Certainly," said the Devil, "if you will insist that every evil passion, desire, and act is a devil. But I, the Devil, must be made the especial scapegoat for all the

villainies of you mortals. I did this and that ; when, in truth, your innate natures, given you by God, are the devils which you should blame, not me."

"But explain yourself more fully," asked the Doctor, "why Judas could not betray Jesus."

"From the fact, as already stated, Jesus knew of it, and there could not be a betrayal. Now, to make the matter as clear as a sunbeam to you, Judas did

TEMPT JESUS, BUT NOT BETRAY

Him ; and if there is any truth in the teachings of Calvinism, Judas was an unfortunate creature of circumstances and surroundings—a tool, an instrument, an intention, in the hands of God. Jesus said : 'Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart.' You cannot do that ; it is an impossibility. That Being to whom you pray is not an expression of *love*, but *adoration* ; the highest and holiest feeling and sentiment of the soul of man. It is above and beyond all desire or association with *love*. Love is a passion, and nothing else, analyze it as you may ; but *adoration* is the soul expression of man, going out in fear, hope, faith, and helplessness. It asks, it begs, it relies upon a Being superior to self. It is dependence, humility, and a feeling of unworthiness. *ADORE* God is the true term of expression, and not *love*. Then to the point. *Betray* should have been translated *tempt* ; for Judas did really *tempt* Jesus."

"What an idea !" exclaimed the Doctor. "What are you driving at with such wild assertions ?"

"The greatest misunderstood truth in the Bible," said the Devil. "One that not one of you mortals out of an hundred or thousand really comprehend, yourself in-

cluded, with the whole hosts of priests and ministers who preach of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas."

"Very broad assertions you are making about the intelligence of the teachers of God's truth," said the Doctor.

"I do make it," replied the Devil; "from the Pope of Rome, the head of the oldest church, down to the humblest exhorter who attempts to elucidate and expound the Bible. Judas had more real faith in Jesus than all the rest of the disciples put together. You know how they acted when He was arrested. Hid themselves, except Peter, and he lied, and swore he did not know Him."

"What assertions!" exclaimed the Doctor. "Are you joking with me for amusement, or are you trying to turn my preaching into ridicule?"

"Nothing of the sort," replied the Devil. "Never more serious in my life; for you should know that I am of a very serious nature. I am impressed with serious reflections when I look upon the conduct of you mortals with immortal spirits to be saved or lost. Judas was not the villain, as you and others preach. He was betrayed by Jesus, not directly, but indirectly, from his associations with Him. You find in the Bible such expressions as these: 'Ye shall not tempt the Lord.' 'I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord.' 'Yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.' Jesus told Satan—me—'You should not tempt the Lord.' Jesus said: 'Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?' on three occasions. 'Neither let us tempt Christ.' 'Therefore, why tempt ye God?' You know where to find all those quotations. But Judas did unwittingly *tempt* Jesus. You understand the word tempt, then?"

"Certainly," replied the Doctor, "in certain senses and interpretations, when used to convey or express an idea."

"That is exactly Judas's case; he had an idea from his surroundings, and he intended to tempt Jesus, for his faith in Him was strong, very strong. There are three great incentives in all actions in life, for, without them, you mortals would not act. They are faith, belief, and hope; they prompt to action. Judas had all three well developed in his ardent nature, his impatient spirit, and strong belief. Hence his desire to 'tempt,' not to 'betray,' Jesus."

"Can't see it in that light to save my soul," said the Doctor.

"Give me your close attention," said the Devil, "and I will give you a very clear reason why Judas tempted, or, as translated, betrayed, Jesus."

THE REASON FOR THE BETRAYAL.

"Judas was one of the twelve, an honored member among the disciples. He was made treasurer, and paid out all the money. He was not a defaulter; no such charge is made against him. True, John said he was a thief, and had the bag. If he stole, he must have stolen for the benefit of the poor disciples; for outside of fishing they could not raise a shekel. He could have retaliated on John, and called him a miserable coward when he ran away to save himself. Very easy to call hard names; you mortals are good at that. Judas had a practical mind. He was no dreamer, no wild enthusiast, but a man of common sense, and determined in his ways when he made up his mind to do a thing."

"Too much so," put in the Doctor.

"Not at all," said the Devil. "He had been with Jesus about three years; he had heard all of His conversations; he had heard all of His teachings and controversies with the priests and scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and all others who denied or doubted His mission. He had seen all of His miracles, which you so much believe in, yet you never saw one of them. He had heard Jesus call himself the Son of man, the Son of God. He had heard for the first time, from the lips of Jesus, God called Father. He had heard Jesus say that the Father lived in Him, and He in the Father; and he who had seen Him, had seen the Father; and many such other expressions. 'I am the truth and the life,' etc."

"So far, so good," put in the Doctor.

"Very good," replied the Devil, with a smile. "Those were not idle words to the ear of Judas. They sank deep down into his very heart and mind; they took hold upon his thoughts; they convinced his reason; they inflamed his spiritual nature; they aroused his religious resentments; they developed both his attachment and adoration for Jesus. Jesus was not only his friend who called him as a disciple; but He was his teacher, his master, the Son of God manifested in the flesh; the Redeemer of Israel, sent by God to redeem His people from bondage. Such were the thoughts of Judas."

"And very correct ones," put in the Doctor.

"Your brain is working right," smiled the Devil. "But when he heard Jesus reviled; called a revolutionist; an enemy to Cæsar; an undoer of the Law; one begotten in fornication; a bastard; in other words, a false and dangerous teacher of new doctrines; saw men

attempt to stone Him ; saw Him insulted and hooted at by the friends of the priests ; saw Him hated and despised by those who made their living from the Temple ; called a devil ; charged with doing His miracles by the aid of Beelzebub ; asked if any good thing could come out of Nazareth, when he, Judas, was a Nazarene also ; so inflamed his nature, so aroused his feelings, that he resolved that Jesus should throw aside His meekness and forgiving nature, and blast with one tremendous blow His enemies, and proclaim Himself the Redeemer of Israel, a God-sent man."

"You are growing eloquent in the defence of Judas," put in the Doctor.

"I was there," said the Devil with a smile, "and I know what Judas thought. His whole nature was afire with hatred towards the Jews of Jerusalem, who reflected not only on Jesus but himself. Said he, in his great excitement :

"Here is my Lord and God, the Redeemer of Israel, the worker of miracles through God, one whom God has ordained to do His will, reviled of men ; denied a hearing ; though misrepresented, persecuted, and slandered, yet He as is patient as a lamb. He who can raise the dead cannot die ; for He has said He has power to lay His life down and to take it up. Hear Him, John x. 18 : 'I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.' 'He shall be tried and tempted !' exclaimed Judas within himself. 'No one can harm the Almighty God !'"

"He was right in one sense," put in the Doctor.

"I see you are softening on Judas," said the Devil. "Said Judas: 'I will make the issue for Jesus. I will glorify Jesus, and God will be glorified in Him. I have it! I have it!' exclaimed Judas. 'I will go to the priests and offer to betray Jesus for money. The vile slanderers of my Lord will quickly embrace the offer. Then, ah, then, will the power of God be manifested through His Son! Then, ah, then, will Jesus stand forth the Redeemer of Israel, the beloved Son of God! Then, ah, then, will the vile Jews of Jerusalem find out if any good thing can come out of Nazareth! Then, ah, then, no longer will the vile rabble, headed by mercenary priests, insult and revile the Son of God!'"

"Pretty good, so far, for Judas," put in the Doctor.

"Very good," replied the Devil. "But hear me through; you see, I am something of a lawyer now for the defendant. So thinking, Judas hastens to the Temple, with his purposes fixed in his mind, and eager with expectations. He makes the proposition, and the priests readily take him up. The bargain was closed, the sign agreed upon, and the deed was done."

"The villain!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"Yes," said the Devil. "Jesus made no resistance; no miracle was worked by Him to save himself. He who had but to speak, and the soldiers would have been dead men, had He so willed. But He was bound with a rope as a common felon, allowed Himself to be led before Pilate as a criminal, put on trial for his life as an enemy to Cæsar. Resignedly He heard the sentence of death passed upon Him, resignedly He went to the cross. Not a miracle worked to save Himself, and while on the cross

was asked to work a miracle. Thus died Jesus, the Son of God—God, as you maintain.”

“Yes, yes!” exclaimed the Doctor. “God! God!”

“Have it so, if you will,” said the Devil. “But what was Judas’s action when Jesus made no resistance? Was he, next morning, a swift witness against Him when before Pilate? Did he revile Him? Did he deny Him? Did he go to the priests with another bargain to appear as a witness for so much more money? He was only paid to betray Him, not to accuse Him in court. Astonished at the outcome of the arrest, what did he do? I read: ‘Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that He was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.’”

“Just what he ought to have done, or had some one to do for him; for he was a murderer in one sense,” said the Doctor.

“Be not too hasty in your judgment,” said the Devil.

“I am not half through yet.”

“What more can you say for him?” asked the Doctor.

“A good deal,” replied the Devil. “If Judas was a villain, as you call him, did he act like one, did he talk like one, when he threw down the silver? Would a villain say that he had betrayed innocent blood? Would a villain have thrown away his money? Would a villain have conscience enough to hang himself? A great pity, then, that all the mortal villains who now

walk the earth do not have Judas's conscience; your courts would have nothing to do. If a villain, would he not have been a willing witness for more money? If he was a villain, then all his acts should have been those of a villain. But there was not one that showed him a villain; but, on the contrary, a man most wonderfully deceived in the miraculous power of Jesus on so great and important an occasion. Judas did not doubt Jesus, though he did not exactly understand Him. The rest of the disciples only thought Him a man. None understood Him at the time, or His mission. Jesus explained Himself after His resurrection, when in Galilee, in the forty days He was with them. They seemed to have learnt more in those forty days than they did in a three years' talk. Their brains were very muddy for three years. Judas was too hasty in his act of suicide; but his sensitive nature could not bear the idea of the great disgrace of being deceived, and the tempter of One he called Lord and Master. Wrought up with a great idea, he saw it miserably fail. His sanguine temperament and nervous organization could not stand up under the shock. His act was simply a rash one, to say the best of it."

"Well, you are a special pleader for Judas, I see," put in the Doctor.

"Somewhat," replied the Devil. "It is astonishing to me how the pure character of Judas has been so misunderstood by you D.Ds. Poor scholarship would be my excuse for you, were I called upon to defend you. In the Bible, by wrong translation, you have *soul*, where it should be *life*; *love*, where it should be *adore*; *betray*, where it should be *tempt*; *hell*, where it should be *grave*; and *hell*, where it should be a *fiery valley* near Jerusa-

lem. Your Bible is full of such mistranslations, and the sooner you teachers of the people tell them the honest truth the better for all parties concerned. I do not purpose to give you a correct reading, though I could do it. It is out of my line of business. Hence you have such false ideas about God, the Devil, hell, and of diseases called devils, lunacy, etc."

"I am satisfied with this old Bible," said the Doctor. "It is good enough for me; there may be some faulty translations, but I am going to stick to the betrayal of Jesus by Judas."

"Just what I know you will do," said the Devil. "For should you take my version of the affair—and I was on the spot—your congregation would think you had a devil in you, and also think you a fit subject for the lunatic asylum. Your pay would stop instantly," said the Devil with a smile. "Judas could not have doubted Jesus, for the miracles he saw were addressed both to his eyes and his reason; and that mortal must be on the border line of lunacy who doubts what he sees and feels. Miracles were the undisputed arguments of Jesus. He worked them to convince His disciples and others; for without them He would have had but a few followers. He was asked time and again to work a miracle by the anxious crowd who followed Him. He gratified them sometimes, and at others positively refused to gratify their curiosity. If you think Judas a villain, so continue to preach. But you do a good and faithful follower of Jesus a great injustice."

"Well, well," said the Doctor, "you have made a very bad case look plausible."

"Truth is ever ready to defend the right," said the

Devil. "It is falsehood and misrepresentation of facts which annoy me. As to slandering me, that does not annoy me in the least. Cowards must have some kind of excuse for their wrong doing, but brave men never. David was the right sort of a man to own up to a fault and take the responsibility."

"Perhaps you can defend David in his seduction case, and having Uriah killed," smilingly asked the Doctor.

"Nothing easier to do," said the Devil. "But I will not discuss it at this sitting. I will say this, however, in conclusion, but you need not repeat it as coming from me, for if you do no one will believe you."

"What is it?" asked the Doctor.

"Why, simply this," said the Devil with a pleasant smile, "Judas is in heaven! God knew that his intentions were good. He knew that he was not a villain; He knew Judas did not want money, but the bright glory of Jesus manifested, and the glory of God with it."

"Gracious me! How you astonish me!" exclaimed the Doctor. "If what you say is true, then I am a fool."

"Good evening," said the Devil, and he went through the wall.

CHAPTER XV.

THE DEVIL DEFENDS DAVID FOR THE KILLING OF URIAH—
THE TRUE VERSION GIVEN—MRS. DEVINE AN ATTENTIVE
LISTENER.

"WELL, well," mused the Doctor in his study, "what evil cannot the Devil justify and make it appear as a real virtue? He has told me that David was justified in having Uriah killed after he had committed adultery with his wife. What an idea! What an idea! The next thing he will want to defend, will be his revolt in heaven, when he drew an army of angels to his side by his sophistry. But it has always been a mystery to me how the Devil, then a bright archangel, could have sinned, when I preach there is no sin in heaven, and it is impossible for sin to enter there. Not only did the Devil sin, but thousands of other angels sinned. However, I am not going to be such a fool as to try to explain that to my congregation. Too deep water for me to fathom mentally. But what evil cannot the Devil defend?"

"I will tell you, Doctor," said a voice near by. "I cannot defend the evil and the nonsense preached weekly from thousands of pulpits about God and myself, making mere tools of God and myself, when it suits their purposes and bad logic. I wish that I could remedy the evil; but to try to defend it, I never will."

The Doctor looked amazed when he saw the Devil within two feet of him. "You gave me a surprise, as you always do, by your sudden appearance. But I am glad to see you, for I am curious to hear your defence of David's conduct—an adulterer and murderer in the eye of God and man." Just then Mrs. Devine wanted to say something to her husband, and ask him what he wanted for breakfast, beefsteak, porksteak, or a mutton chop? The Devil saw her in an instant, and with a bow so polite, so winning, and so inviting, asked her to take a seat, and hear an argument about her sex.

"Who?" asked Mrs. Devine.

"Bathsheba," replied the Devil; "a name which means a seventh daughter, or a daughter of an 'oath.'"

"Bad woman, I am afraid," said Mrs. Devine.

"Not at all, not at all; far more sinned against than sinning. In fact, she did not sin at all," said the Devil.

"Proceed," said the Doctor; "it will not hurt Mrs. Devine to hear your argument if it has any truth in it."

"The story is simple enough," said the Devil. "It is history; it is a fact; and it bears the impress of mortal conduct true to life in thought, in action, and in intention; of passions, of desires, and of pleasures—a thing that very often happens among you mortals. The deed was natural; for it was in harmony with man's strong and aggressive passions, though in violation of social law, the marital bed, and the seventh commandment. But such a passion, when thoroughly aroused in man, cares but little for moral or divine law. At least David did not."

"You admit, then," put in the Doctor, "that David did commit a sin?"

"Certainly, certainly," replied the Devil; "as much so as if he had taken God's name in vain, broken the sabbath, or stolen anything. Make any law you please, and, when it is law, to violate it is to do wrong. For if it were not so it would not be law. As to enforcing your laws—that is, with you mortals—if you let the thief, murderer, or adulterer go free, as you too often do, from a false sentiment of pity or mercy, that is your own lookout. It comes not within the jurisdiction of God or myself while the criminal is in this world. He will have a very fair trial in another world, I can assure you. It will be a question then of right, justice, and motive."

"It ought to be so," said the Doctor; "but proceed with your defence of David."

"Well, it seems that David," said the Devil "(Second Samuel, chapter eleven), happened to walk upon his housetop, and saw Bathsheba washing herself; she was beautiful in face and form, and David's lustful passions took possession of him—not I in him, please understand, but his innate passions. David sent for her, or, rather, took her, and she came unto him. The result of that adultery was conception, and she so told David. Mark you, David immediately sent for **URIAH**, the husband of Bathsheba, and, when he came, asked him 'how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered.'

"Now," asked the Devil, "what is the first great duty of a soldier or a subject towards his commander or king?"

"Obedience, of course," replied the Doctor.

"Quick and prompt obedience, is it not?" asked the Devil.

"Certainly," replied the Doctor.

"No excuses or explanations, or whys or wherefores, but to obey promptly and cheerfully?" asked the Devil.

"That is the way I view it," said the Doctor. "An order, command, or request from a king demands obedience."

"Precisely," answered the Devil, with a smile. "Now what did David say to or tell Uriah? 'And David said to URIAH, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet.' Bear that *command* in mind, if you please. 'And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess of meat from the king.' A very high honor from a king to a subject, please remember. 'But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.' An open and premeditated disobeying of an order or command from his king, and an insult thrown in, when food was sent him."

"Uriah ought to have gone down to his wife," put in Mrs. Devine. "Meat or no meat, he had his orders to go."

"You are right, madam," said the Devil, with a smile. "He should have obeyed his king. He had been distinctly told to go down to his house and wash his feet. They were dirty, and needed washing badly. He was guilty of insubordination, and slept where he had no business to sleep. The servants knew of the command, and the meat being sent."

"That is so," said Mrs. Devine; "his business was to have gone straight home. Bathsheba was no doubt looking with eager eyes for him. She had the meat on the table ready for him. Felt honored that the king was so thoughtful of her husband. Besides, his feet were

dirty. He should have washed them at home, and then gone to bed. There is where he should have slept."

"Hush! hush!" said the Doctor. "What do you know about it?"

"Very correct, madam," smiled the Devil. "I was there, or thereabouts. But hear: 'And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from thy journey? why then didst thou not go down unto thine house? Uriah said unto David: The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.' Uriah, you see, was trying to bank on some sort of extra patriotism, displaying more zeal for the ark than a show of common sense, or love for his wife. Again, he told his king to his face, that he would not go down to his house or eat the meat sent him. In other words, he would not obey him."

"He ought, by all means, to have gone and seen his wife," put in Mrs. Devine. "His reasons were all nonsense. I don't believe he loved his wife."

"Correct again, madam," said the Devil. "I see you know what is right and proper, and how a man should treat his wife, especially when he had been cut off from home comforts. But mark the action of David, so anxious was he for Uriah to go down to his house. 'And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to-day also, and to-morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow.' What was he doing

loafing about Jerusalem, calling on other folks, but not his wife? Telling, no doubt, some of his war stories."

"The mean, good-for-nothing creature!" said Mrs. Devine. "He ought to have been ashamed of himself to treat his poor wife as he did. Had she been his sweetheart, David could not have kept him away. That is the difference between husbands and lovers."

"Hush, will you?" put in the Doctor. "I see you are already on the Devil's side."

"Correct, madam," said the Devil. "But I read: 'And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made Uriah drunk: and at the even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.' Now, observe that Uriah could eat and drink to drunkenness with the king, and lie with the servants, but was too patriotic (?) to go and see his wife. What sort of a husband do you call that?"

"A real good-for-nothing sort of a husband," said Mrs. Devine, with emphasis. "If the Doctor should treat me that way, I——"

"Do, pray, hush!" said the Doctor. "You do not know what you are talking about."

"Correct, madam," said the Devil. "Here was a man with a sham patriotism, disobeying his king, insulting him by not eating the meat sent him, and treating his wife with a disregard and indifference worthy only of a brute."

"That is so, that is so!" exclaimed Mrs. Devine.

"Correct, madam," said the Devil. "But mark you what David thought about such treatment to himself and to his wife. He did not recognize such open disobedience

to his commands. He was in no humor to be insulted by one whose business it was to obey even a request, for a request from a king is an order. He sent Uriah back to the army he seemed to desire so much, with his own death-warrant in his pocket. Just what he deserved. He little knew of David's hot anger against him."

"Just so," put in Mrs. Devine, "the mean wretch!"

"Do you justify David's conduct towards Uriah?" asked the Doctor of the Devil.

"Certainly I do," replied the Devil. "Disobedience to a king means death; and Uriah should have known it. He presumed upon the king's politeness towards him. David was not in the habit of allowing his commands or orders to be treated with contempt. Uriah was slain, as David intended he should be; killed in battle, as he plumed himself on being a brave soldier. The error committed by David was in having so many men killed in battle to get rid of Uriah. David should have had him assassinated. But David had an object in view, alike honorable to himself and to Uriah; for Uriah met a soldier's death, a death of all others, if he had to die, he preferred. Now, David shows his hand in a very honorable way. He had committed adultery with Bathsheba, perhaps against her will, for he was her king. He now makes her his wife and a queen."

"Good for David!" exclaimed Mrs. Devine. "Good man!"

"What do you mean?" asked the Doctor. "Are you advocating adultery?"

"Not at all, not at all," said the Devil; "she is only admiring David's sense of honor in the matter."

"You are right! you are right!" exclaimed Mrs.

Devine. "He first did a wrong thing, and then a right thing. He made atonement to Bathsheba which was right and honorable."

"No honor about it, that I can see," said the Doctor, "except the honor of adultery. He had Uriah killed just to get his wife."

"There you are terribly mistaken, and do David a mighty wrong!" exclaimed the Devil. "Why did he send for Uriah, and endeavor to get the fool or fanatic to go down to his house and see his wife? Why did he tell him, as an order or command, to go down and wash his feet? Why did he honor him by sending meat to his house? Why did he get the man drunk next day, but to induce him to go and see his wife? Why did he offer him a furlough? David knew what he was about. He did not want Bathsheba for a wife; he had at the time no less than twenty wives. He had a humane and considerate object in view. If he had wanted the woman for a wife he could have had Uriah killed without his ever seeing his wife, or, at least, having him sent home to see his wife."

"What was that humane object?" asked the Doctor.

"Simple enough," said the Devil; "and as a D.D., you ought to know full well. Bathsheba was with child by him, as you know, and only a week advanced. Had Uriah gone and seen his wife, there would never for a moment have been a doubt on his mind but that he was the father of the child when born. Bathsheba would have saved herself from the charge of being guilty of adultery. That was David's object and desire. A nicely laid plan of his, you see. Plain enough."

"I still think he wanted Bathsheba and Uriah out of the way," said the Doctor.

"What nonsense!" said the Devil. "David wanted to save the life of Bathsheba, and did save it. Uriah did not go down to his house; he did not see his wife, and in time she would be a mother. Uriah would have brought the charge of adultery against her, and truly, and demanded of David, as the Holy One of Israel—for all kings were called that—that he should execute the Mosaic law upon her, which was: 'A woman taken in adultery shall be stoned to death.' David knew that he would have to execute that law, for there was no getting around it. 'No,' said David. 'She shall live; I am the wrong-doer; I shall send for her husband, and, as she is only a week gone, all will be right. When Uriah comes, I shall send him home.' Uriah was disobedient, and the adultery would soon declare itself. Said David, 'I gave the man a chance for his life, but he now shall die.' What then? After the death of Uriah, David makes her his wife, thus saving her life and her honor, for he made her also his queen. There was no adultery then. The child was born, and David loved it much, but it died, as you know. It may be a pleasure for you to know that Uriah is in heaven. He was a good man and brave soldier, but rather an indifferent husband, as a lover."

"Well, well!" exclaimed Mrs. Devine, "I never thought of or saw it in that light before. David was a real gentleman, bless his dear heart! for Bathsheba became his favorite queen, and had more influence over him than all the rest of his wives. Bathsheba was his twenty-first wife; more from necessity than choice on

David's part. Doctor, let us call our boy Jesse, David."

"Very true, madam," said the Devil, "for I was there, and kept my eye on David; for I had a great deal of respect for his character—always honest and frank."

"But the thing that David did, displeased the Lord," said the Doctor, "and the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it died, so we are told in the Bible."

"Precisely," said the Devil. "God punished David by taking away the child he so much loved. That was David's punishment as God administered it. God punishes a good many fathers and mothers in this world, if they but knew it. The child is blessed, but the parents are punished here in this world."

"David deserved well his punishment," said the Doctor. "His adultery was punished."

"God knows more about His own laws and intentions," replied the Devil, "than you or I do. He uses me, He uses angels, He uses you, and He uses all mortals for His own good ends, if you but knew it. His ways are not as your ways, by a good deal."

"Explain yourself," said the Doctor.

"I will," said the Devil. "The child that died was begotten in adultery; it was, in a certain sense, an illegitimate. The other children of David were born in marriage. Solomon, the son of David and Bathsheba, was born in marriage, and God so recognized him. He was a favorite with God, as you are told. He was David's favorite son, to whom he gave the kingdom over older brothers. Now mark the results of the marriage of David and Bathsheba. Without Bathsheba,

there would have been no Solomon; without Solomon, there would probably have been no Temple; without a Temple, the Israelites would have been without a marked nationality; it was their religious and national constitution. The Temple was the bond of union between the tribes. Without Solomon, there would have been no Proverbs, no Ecclesiastes, no Song of Solomon, no rich and glorious kingdom as under Solomon. David had many sons, but Solomon ranked them all in wisdom, talents, and genius. As a king and as a writer, he has left the impress of his glory upon the world."

"Doctor," exclaimed Mrs. Devine, "I believe David did right in what he did. God certainly had a hand in that matter. I am too good a Calvinist to believe any other way."

"Are you going crazy?" asked the Doctor.

"If Calvinism makes one crazy, then I am partly crazy," said Mrs. Devine.

"I do not wish to enter or take a hand in the discussion on Calvinism," said the Devil, "as between you and your wife. But I have this to say, that the Bible on the table there teaches predestination, election, selection, protection, preordination, foreordination, coördination, subordination, and damnation. You find it from Genesis to Revelation, and all through the book. The Bible is a Jewish book, written by Jews for Jews, and explained to Jews by Jewish teachers. Moses was a Jew, Abraham was a Jew, David was a Jew, Isaiah was a Jew, Jesus was a Jew, Paul was a Jew, Peter, James, and John were all Jews. Paul said to Felix: 'But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers.' They understood

their Bible better than any Gentile that ever walked the earth. They understood all their prophets, and worshipped in the Temple after the death of Jesus. They were the chosen people of God—the very elect, the very predestinated, the very preordained to be a light to the Gentiles. But the Gentiles, with more mysticism than modesty, are trying to be a light to the Jews, explaining their own prophecies to them, saying they do not understand their own scriptures or their fathers.

“The very salt of the earth, as Jesus taught. But God has no Calvinism in Him, I can assure you; and all this foolishness about predestination and election, as taught, that some will be saved and some will be lost, is an insult to God’s love, mercy, and justice. The gates of heaven are wide open to the pure in heart, regardless of all race distinctions, Jew or Gentile. Every mortal man and woman must work out their own salvation or damnation, just as they choose. God impresses or elects no mortal to be good, nor do I impress any to be evil. It is like working in this world: he who works well, lives well; he who makes no effort, starves, or should starve.”

“Are you a doctor of divinity?” asked Mrs. Devine of the Devil, carried away with his eloquence.

“No, madam,” answered the Devil, with a smile. “I am simply the Devil, the servant of God, and the principal keeper of hell.”

“What a question to ask him!” exclaimed the Doctor.

“Oh, I forgot!” said Mrs. Devine. “But D.D., can stand for ‘dazzling devil.’”

“Correct, madam; very correct,” said the Devil, with a smile. “You have a good many in the pulpit; those

who preach for money, for notoriety, to make a show of themselves, whose god is really 'Mammon.' But to go back to David. God may have used David for great purposes; that strong passion of his, which had more passion than piety in it, more of lust than love, was to work out great good. I certainly had nothing to do with him. The mysterious workings of God are too deep, too high, and too unfathomable for you or any mortal to sound, to reach, or to explain. I often smile at the supposed wisdom of you mortals, when you attempt to explain the Infinite Mind or infinite intentions. You are but mere gropers in the dark, at best, and, many times, blind leaders of the blind."

"That is so," said the Doctor. "I often feel my utter littleness when I attempt to comprehend God and explain His wondrous workings towards man."

"The most sensible thing you can say," replied the Devil. "Say, in the language of Job, whom I knew well: 'Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.'"

"Hereafter," said the Doctor, "I must do David justice in his marriage with Bathsheba, for he was actuated by the most honorable motives. He did not at first want her for a wife; but God, in His inscrutable ways, overruled his plans towards Uriah, though he was ignorant of the polite attentions of David his king."

"Doctor, I am so glad to hear you say that," said his wife with a smile. "David was a real nice man, and if he did break the seventh commandment, Bathsheba as queen had no fault to find."

Said the Devil to Mrs. Devine: "Madam, I have read

your heart since you have been in here. I have read also your future. When death shall, in coming years, free your soul from your body, heaven will be your home. I bid you farewell forever." As quick as thought he was gone.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DEVIL HAS SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT PETER, PAUL,
JAMES, AND OTHERS—WHY CAIN KILLED ABEL.

AFTER the Devil left, Dr. Devine said to his wife: "My dear, from what he said, you can read your title clear to mansions in the skies."

"I pray God that it may be so," said Mrs. Devine, with reverence. "I certainly shall trust in Him, worship Him, adore Him, and fear Him."

"Well, if you do that, I feel that you have nothing to fear when the pale messenger bids you hence."

"The Devil is a remarkably fine talker, and very entertaining; and he reasons so clearly. You see he never goes outside of the Bible for his facts. He never quotes anybody as an authority to clinch his argument," said Mrs. Devine.

"He is the most plausible being I ever met. Subtle, sharp, and spicy. I do not exactly comprehend him yet. He does not deny God. He recognizes Him as the maker of all law, and looks upon himself as a mere instrument in His hands. Very humble. I hardly know upon what point to test his sophistry; for he seems to be at home upon all points, and has studied the Bible as a regular theologian, though I don't see that it has been of any particular benefit to him. Well, I will go to

bed, and think over to-morrow what to ask him." With that, Doctor and Mrs. Devine retired.

The next evening the Doctor was in his study, and said to himself: "What questions shall I put to the Devil when he comes? There is one thing very certain about him, he has no very great respect for the knowledge that men have of God or God's workings among men. He thinks man supremely ignorant on that point, and has more of superstition, preconceived ideas, and fanciful imaginings than anything else. I——"

"That is so, Doctor."

"How you startled me!" exclaimed the Doctor. "Ah! you are here, then?"

"Generally about when I have a business engagement; and, seeing you sitting alone, thought I would drop in and have another social chat with you on things theological," said the Devil.

"Well," said the Doctor, "you have thoroughly converted my wife to your way of thinking about David, and I have modified my views in a great degree."

"Glad to hear it," said the Devil. "Your wife is a very sensible woman, and nearly as handsome as Abishag, whose beauty cost Adonijah his life at the hands of Solomon, his half-brother."

"I was reading this morning in my Bible, and thinking of you and the charges against you, and I would like to hear your explanation in regard to them."

"Very well," said the Devil, "let me hear them."

"I read," said the Doctor, "Psalm cix. 6: 'Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand.' 1 Tim. i. 20: 'Of whom is Hymenæus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may

learn not to blaspheme.' 1 Cor. v. 5: 'To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.'"

"Well," said the Devil, with a smile, "Paul makes of me a kind of school-teacher. Sends two to me so they may not learn to blaspheme, because they could not take in all of Paul's faith; and delivers another over to me for the destruction of the flesh, so that he might be eventually saved. I am put in rather an original role from what I am really conceived to be. I am to do good rather than evil. But I protest against being made such a tool of by Paul or any other mortal. I am not at the beck and call of mortals, though many are fools enough to think so."

"How is that?" asked the Doctor.

"How often do you hear fierce denunciations from the pulpit, of sending men to hell if they do not believe in this, that, or the other thing, or if they do not do this, that, or some other thing; believe in some certain church, creed, dogma, or confession of faith; as if you mortals had the keys of heaven or hell, or as if God would open the gates at your command, or I pay the least attention to your assumed audacity. It makes me smile when I hear of such impudence, audacity, and mendacity from a parcel of religious bigots, who, if they get to heaven, may be thankful for God's mercy."

"But they have the Bible for their authority," put in the Doctor.

"They have not," answered the Devil. "They have their fanatical theories; their bigoted spirits; their narrow creeds; their hard dogmas; their blind faith; and if

any thinking, doubting mind objects and repudiates their nonsense, to hell they are sent, because they won't believe what is taught and preached. Read the history of the Church, the Protestant Church, and all other so-called churches, when bigotry walked the earth a monarch. Christians called Catholics burnt dissenters, or Protestants. Protestants, when in power, burnt Catholics. Calvinism burnt Servetus, because he did not believe Jesus was God. In Holland the Calvinists persecuted the Remonstrants. Cranmer, when a Lutheran, consented to the burning of John Lambert and Ann Askew because they were Unitarians, like Servetus; and when he, Cranmer, became a sacramentarian, believing in the real eating of the body of Jesus, he was the cause of the death of Joan Bocher; but the Church of Rome burnt him in time; I trembled for the human race; heaven was shocked, and angels wept over human folly. If hell could have been made a jail by the authority of you mortals, or the fires lighted at the dictation of popes, bishops, priests, ministers, and fanatical religionists, I would have had more than my hands full, quick as I am about my duties when God speaks. But God does not delegate such tremendous power to you short-sighted mortals, for He well knows what havoc you would create upon the earth. Neither Peter, Paul, James, or John could or can send any mortals to me; and if they did, I would not receive them. They have no such authority; for I recognize God only as the Supreme Judge of the world. It is then blasphemy for any mortal to talk of turning any other mortal over to me for any purposes whatsoever in a spiritual way. In the flesh I know you not; but as an immortal spirit I deal with you."

"How you do talk!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"Think you," continued the Devil, "that God is going to delegate any of His omniscient and omnipotent power and authority to any finite mortal, a miserable creature of passions, prejudice, malignity, ignorance, and bigotry? Do not offend Him with such a thought, no matter what any fanatical mortal may claim for himself. There is no higher law than God Himself. God has no private secretaries or confidential messengers. Are you one of those who imagine that you have a special message to deliver from God, and know all about the Infinite Mind?"

"No! no!" exclaimed the Doctor. "Why do you ask such an absurd question?"

"Because there are some very foolish mortals who believe that way," said the Devil, "and they preach it."

"You astonish me!" said the Doctor. "Who are they, for goodness gracious' sake?"

"Strange that you should ask such a question," said the Devil.

"I don't comprehend," replied the Doctor.

"Well," said the Devil, "you believe in God; you believe in the teachings of the Bible as you interpret them; you have faith as taught in the Bible, or as you interpret faith; you believe in Jesus as a man, as a Son of God, as God; you think you understand the Word of God; you feel that you have or desire the holy influences of His Spirit; you endeavor to walk uprightly before God; you endeavor to do good to your fellow mortals, do you not? And do you not believe all that I have stated as to facts?"

"Certainly I do," exclaimed the Doctor.

"Glad to hear you say it," said the Devil. "Now, listen. Can you go into any church and preach what you believe, if you so requested or desired? Would you be permitted to fill many pulpits not of your own peculiar faith and belief? Does your belief in God, or your faith in Jesus as the Son of God, open every church door to you? Are you welcomed or desired by many other ministers, priests, or preachers who differ with you as to faith and belief, and interpretation of the Scriptures? Are you recognized as orthodox in your faith by thousands who think as well as yourself, and who are as honest in their faith as you are?"

"By no means," replied the Doctor. "Many church doors are shut to me, because I hold to a different creed, belief, faith, and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures."

"Just so," said the Devil, with a smile. "Now, to be directly and pointedly personal, would you allow any ministers, priests, or preachers who differed with you in faith or belief, who would preach in direct contradiction to your orthodox views, though they believed in God, believed in Jesus as the Son of God, as God, or believed Him to be simply the Son of Man—would you, I ask, permit ministers as honest as yourself to contradict you in your own pulpit, and give altogether a new interpretation to the teachings of Jesus, Peter, and Paul?"

"Well, well," replied the Doctor, "I don't think I would; for you see——"

"I don't want to see," said the Devil, interrupting the Doctor, "anything; for I see that you are just as bigoted,

narrow-minded, creed-bound, dogma-ridden, faith-blind, as the rest of narrow-minded religious mortals. And that is the reason why the world has been cursed with so many intolerant religious wars, and men died hating each other, and sending each other to hell by thousands, so far as you poor, miserable mortals could do it. That is your weak human nature all over; beginning with Cain, who was intolerant with his brother's worship, and will only end with the ending of the world, unless those who really fear and adore God shall shake hands and be brothers among themselves."

"Did Cain kill Abel on account of a religious difference of opinion?" asked the Doctor, with some sort of astonishment.

"Certainly he did," replied the Devil. "I was there and know all about it. You should know that Cain told Abel that the Lord wanted fruits, not blood; that He had said to our father Adam, 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground;' and as the Lord had put their father to work, of course He expected the fruits of the ground.

"That looks reasonable," said Cain, "and that is the way I interpret the Lord's intention in calling for offerings to Him."

"I differ with you," said Abel; "I intend to offer Him a lamb, for He clothed father and mother with skins, and that is the way I interpret His desires in asking for an offering at our hands."

"All stuff and nonsense," said Cain. "Do you suppose that all of father's sweat means nothing, and goes for nothing, except a bare living? Is there no redeeming or atoning virtue in it? Was not the ground cursed for

his sake? Fruits, by all means, should be offered to God, and I intend to offer the best to be had.'

"'All wrong,' replied Abel. 'The very fact that God turned tailor, and made coats of skin for father and mother, means a good deal. He wants blood, for He had to kill a sheep to get the skins. If he had wanted fruit, He could have greatly improved upon the fig leaves—the banana, or other larger leaves. I intend to offer Him a lamb.'

"'Wrong again,' replied Cain. 'Father is himself the fruit of the earth; he was made from it, and will return to it, so he tells us.'

"'I don't care,' replied Abel. 'Mother was not made out of dust; and I guess that when God took a rib from father, he took blood and flesh with it. Mother is not the creation of a dry bone, not a bit of it. I intend to offer Him flesh and blood.'

"'Stuff! all stuff!' replied Cain. 'Was not the tree of knowledge a fruit tree? Fruit ranks everything; for God would not have put so much knowledge in fruit if He did not intend it to be of the greatest use imaginable. Certainly He wants fruit, and He shall have it.'

"'I hate the very name of fruit,' replied Abel, 'for here we are on account of it. Mother says the fruit she ate was a very dangerous and tempting kind, and that she knew too much by a good deal. No fruit for me. Blood every time.'

"God did respect Abel's offering; but Cain still held on to his religious idea, just as you mortals do to this day. He ended the argument with Abel by killing him; and mankind believes to this day that blood and death

settle all great questions of truth, principles, right and wrong, and all faiths, if they were permitted to fight it out on that line. With the religious war-cry that 'might is right, and woe to the vanquished,' you would have all the hell you wanted on this fair and beautiful world God has given you. Faith, religious faith, is in a great degree intolerant, and the history of the world will bear me out in the assertion. Fanaticism and bigotry are the blind worms of the brain, which eat out reason and destroy judgment.

"But to go back to our starting point," said the Doctor. "You do not admit that you can be ordered about by us mortals, and be made to do this or that thing, to reform or to punish man?"

"Not a bit of it," replied the Devil. "I am not at the service of you short-sighted and intolerant mortals, I can assure you; for a hell of a world you would make of this one, in truth and in fact, if I could be made your tool. God is too wise to delegate any such power to you mortals; and if he did, I would then ask for annihilation, as the greatest of all of God's good gifts. Any more questions?"

"Well," said the Doctor, "I see from the Bible that you are called man's adversary; charged with cunning ways; that is, we must put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. That you walk about as a roaring lion, seeking whom you may devour. That you get into men, women, children, and hogs, and do all sorts of things. That you are a universal evil and a pest, to put it in my own language. That you thwart God's ways. That you nullify the influence of Jesus Christ. That you make of

none effect the workings of the Holy Spirit. I presume you deny all such charges, and say they are lies told upon and about you?"

"No, not lies," said the Devil, "but misrepresentations, misinterpretations of language, misunderstanding as to real facts; taking figures of speech for facts; talking allegorically and parabolically; and last, but not the least, playing upon human ignorance and superstition."

"What do you mean by that?" asked the Doctor. "Was Jesus ignorant and superstitious? Were His Apostles and Disciples ignorant and superstitious?"

"Jesus," said the Devil, "spoke in parables, and parables are not facts, but illustrations; a pleasant sort of way to arrest attention and strike the common, unthinking mind. Think you there is a speaking distance between heaven and hell? I tell you there is not; I know all about the latter place. Think you really that God has a throne and crown? Think you that God keeps books in heaven, or He has recording angels to note down the sins of you mortals? What does omniscience want with books? The only book you will see when you take leave of your flesh, will be the book of your life as you yourself have written it. God will judge you by your own book-keeping—that, and nothing more. The record you will make of your own actions in life, will stand against you the hour you die. You cannot falsify your record if you would. Your judgment day is then, and only then. What a low conception you mortals have of God with a throne, crown, books, and a judgment day! Cease preaching such figurative stuff. Preach God as the rewarder

of good and evil, as every mortal makes his own indelible record against his life for good or evil."

"As you say," said the Doctor, "it is allegorical and parabolical; but it reaches men's minds the quicker for it."

"True," said the Devil, "but what is applicable to God as a spirit, is equally applicable to me as a spirit. You cannot make fish of one and fowl of another when you talk of spirits. God is a spirit, and I am a spirit; but I am subservient to God as a spirit, and can do nothing without His permission."

"Then you do not rank yourself with God?" asked the Doctor.

"Certainly not," said the Devil. "Did I ever claim such pretensions? You mortals have claimed it for me, but I never claimed it for myself; and you cannot show it in the Bible, great as have been magnified my powers. You have magnified Jesus into God, when He never for a moment had such an idea in His head. He would sooner, as a reverential and pious Jew, fearing God, have proclaimed Himself the Devil manifested in the flesh than God, and worked upon the fears of the Jews more than their love for God, and would have sooner been believed in by the Jews. If I once got into men, women, and hogs, it was by permission. But why do I not now get into you mortals, and why am I not cast out by some mortal power as was claimed some eighteen hundred years ago? Why do you not now believe in such evil influences and power? Why not hunt up some Peter, Silas, Barnabas, Paul, or John to do such miracles now?"

"You see," said the Doctor, "we live in altogether a

different age, and those things stated in the Bible were for a sign, and to show forth the power of God through Jesus; and Jesus delegated such power to Peter, John, James, Paul, and to——”

“All bishops, popes, and priests who claim apostolic succession from Peter down to the present day; or to John or Paul, to work miracles, cast out devils, heal the sick, and to do many wonderful things,” put in the Devil. “But they dare not attempt any such nonsense now in this the nineteenth century, when scientists, physicians, doctors of divinity, and common-sense men are about. Where ignorance reigns, the mother of devotion, faith and belief are quite active children.”

“Stop! stop!” exclaimed the Doctor. “That day has long since passed, and no man or minister has such power now.”

“How do you know?” asked the Devil, with a smile. “I am better posted than you are. I know more about this world than you do. I am at home in every country and among every people. Miracles are worked when there is any necessity for it, and the people believe in them. But there are no newspapers about; the people cannot read, nor is it to the interest of those who work miracles that they should either read or think. The people in those countries are ignorant and superstitious, as were ever the people in Jerusalem who, in the days of Jesus, believed in devils, ghosts, spirits, and such like. Where priests reign supreme, the people believe anything they are taught to believe. It is the history the world over. But when people think, investigate, examine, and demand proof openly, miracles

grow small by degrees and beautifully less, and suddenly disappear altogether. A supernatural religion is no religion at all; it is superstition and blind faith."

"A great deal of truth in that," said the Doctor; "for as men grow wise from thought and reading, for getting after facts, and analyzing words, symbols, signs, and modes of expression, God and the Devil do not play a very conspicuous part in their every-day actions. We have found out that natural causes produce natural results.

"Then I am to understand," asked the Doctor, continuing, "that all the charges brought against you in the Bible are metaphorical, allegorical, and parabolical, and not a real fact?"

"Precisely," answered the Devil. "For the laws of nature do not change as man grows wise. That law which is not true in every particular is no law at all. Nature's laws are unchangeable. Neither wisdom nor ignorance has anything to do with them. Neither do the laws of God, in a spiritual sense, change with man's advancement. What was true of man two thousand years ago, is equally true of him to-day. The same passions, appetites, desires, inclinations, and motives which rule his actions to-day, ruled the actions of his forefathers since the creation of the world. Men married before the flood, and they are doing the same thing to-day; they fought before the flood, and are doing it now; but only upon a larger and more destructive scale. You are no better or worse than were your fathers before you. True, you are more advanced in the arts, science, learning, etc.; but your moral and spiritual

natures are the same. There has been no law in nature which has changed you. Your passions and desires are the gods and devils in you which prompt you to do what you do. I disclaim any desire to rank your passions, for they are stronger than I am to move and incite you to action, whether it be for good or evil. By you, I mean all mortals who tread the earth now or ever will."

"You clear yourself pretty freely of being an evil spirit," said the Doctor.

"I repeat," replied the Devil, "take from you your passions or desires to do evil or wrong, change your nature, and then there would be no use of another heaven; for this world would be a heaven to you. Let God step in, and by divine power take possession of you, and you would no longer be a free agent; for you would be like God from necessity, and not choice, and there would be no virtue in you of yourself. You would have no virtue; for no infant has virtue, because it is incapable of doing wrong.

"But let me," continued the Devil, "take complete possession of you, by God's permission, to work in you only evil, as you preach, and I would make a hell of this earth in a day; and there would be no necessity of a spiritual hell after death. But God will not let me work evil unless it is for some wise purpose of His will; and without His will I can do nothing. Any more questions to ask?"

"I believe not just at this time," replied the Doctor; "but call again, and we will have a summing-up of all that you have said. I want time to gather up my thoughts."

"Very good," said the Devil. "I will be on hand when wanted. Good evening." And the Devil seemed to have darted into the Doctor's breast pocket where he had his pocket-book, and the Doctor instinctively grabbed for it.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DOCTOR'S SENSIBLE REFLECTIONS—THE DEVIL ON
MINISTERS—WHAT THEY SHOULD TEACH.

"WELL," said the Doctor, as he was sitting in his study two evenings after his last talk with the Devil, "I don't know what to think exactly of the Devil; for he will not admit anything except in a qualified way, and then he always brings God in as an adjunct to his doings, and would really make Him *particeps criminis* to all of his evil deeds. He says God permits or uses him, as in the cases of Job, Jesus, and Judas; but he utterly repudiates the idea that any mortal man can use him for any purposes whatsoever. He looks upon that as a kind of insult to his dignity, for he has a very great opinion of himself.

"To tell the truth, the Devil," continued the Doctor, "is not far wrong when he says that God uses him to try men; but then I don't think that doctrine will go down with my congregation, for then they would have altogether a different opinion of the Devil. We ministers must stick to the old Eastern idea of having two meanings for the same story—an exoteric one to give to our uninformed congregations, and an esoteric one for ourselves; for if we attempted to explain everything from our standpoint of knowledge, there would be no end

to explaining. Like the old priests and the partisans of to-day, we must from necessity have a meaning for the people, and one for ourselves. It will never do to put the people to too much thinking. St. Paul understood the art of a double meaning, and I will act upon it. He told his listeners that 'I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.' St. Paul called them babes in Christ—and that is about the truth with nine-tenths of church-goers and hearers—'but strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age.' That is, those who are fully as smart and know as much as the teacher in the pulpit. The pews are beginning to get a little too learned for some ministers."

Continued the Doctor: "A minister cannot afford to have his congregation wiser than himself; for if they are, he will soon find his salary cut down, as a hint that they did not object to his presence in the spirit, but that they would like to have him absent in the flesh. The Catholic Church well understands its business, and there is no foolishness allowed in that church. 'The Church says so and so,' and that ends the matter. No questions are allowed to be asked, no kicking tolerated, no argument heard. I like that kind of authority, for it is the history of the Church from the days of Moses down to this time; for priestly authority must be all authority, or no authority at all. We Protestants are great kickers; and hence ministers are kicked out of their pulpits if they do not preach the orthodoxy they are paid to preach. A bargain is a bargain, and ministers must stick to their paid-for orthodoxy.

"But," continued the Doctor, "there are, in some

churches, as much brains or more in the pews as in the pulpit, and I pity the poor minister. He is in a bad fix, and he feels embarrassed every time he preaches. The Methodist Church gets over that trouble elegantly; for a weak minister is sent to a weak charge, and the thing works beautifully. And if a mistake is made, another conference will right matters. But, thank God, I can hold my own with my congregation, though I have some pretty clear-headed fellows who come to hear me talk. So much as to my ideas as to what a minister should be.

"But," continued the Doctor, "I will not in the future be so hard down on the Devil as in the past, for he has made a pretty fair argument in favor of himself, and I cannot reasonably deny it; for if God permits him to work evil, he does it by God's permission; and if God hates evil, He could very easily cut short the Devil's deeds and existence, if contrary to His divine will. That is a fair logical conclusion. If God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die for us, He could have as easily killed 'the dog that bites us.' But it would never do to say such a thing to my congregation, for it would be throwing a bomb-shell among them, and putting them to serious thought, which might lead in the end to infidelity and skepticism. To reach a man's mind quickly and effectively is to shock it; thought then leaps instantly to the front. Great truths shock the average mind, just as the Devil has shocked me."

"Now you are talking real good, common, hard sense, and telling the plain truth to yourself."

The Doctor sprang from his chair as if it had been

doubly surcharged with electricity. "You here!" exclaimed the Doctor to the Devil.

"Certainly I am here," said the Devil; "and I am so glad to see and know that you are at least honest with yourself, if not with your congregation. God looks with pity and displeasure upon a coward, when he should be a bold and fearless leader. Ministers are great moral cowards when they have to look a plain truth in the face from the pulpit."

"What do you mean?" asked the Doctor.

"I mean simply this: to teach as an actual fact," said the Devil, "something as an actual *bona fide* truth or fact, when it is simply an allegory or parable. The story of the Garden of Eden is an allegory. The creation of man an allegory. Cain and Abel an allegory. The flood and Noah's ark an allegory. The building of the Tower of Babel an allegory. Abraham, Isaac, and the ram an allegory. The crossing of the Red Sea by Israel, only the receding of the tide in the evening, and returning in the morning, as is plainly stated, which caught the Egyptians; no miracle about it. The Lord as a pillar of cloud by day, and by night a pillar of fire, is an allegory. Moses and the serpent in the wilderness an allegory. Jonah and the fish an allegory; for the word Sidon means fish. Daniel and the lions an allegory. The fiery furnace and the fire-proof children of Israel an allegory. Samson and Delilah an allegory—but he was not the only strong man who has been caught by a pretty woman—and many, many more such stories. The war in heaven an allegory. The Judgment Day an allegory; in truth, the whole book of Revelation is but one fancy allegory. Dives and Lazarus an allegory.

Paul's vision an allegory. But enough. You preach such things as real facts and truths, and say to your congregation, 'Don't doubt;' 'don't investigate;' 'have faith;' 'have faith.' 'Be as little children, and receive it as an actual fact.' All allegories are important lessons to teach some truth. Easy for the minister, but terribly hard for a thinking congregation to have such faith. 'It is a mystery; it is a miracle; and that is all we have to say about it—have faith.' How often have I heard in the pulpits all over the country such expressions as these: 'The Bible was not made for us to understand, but to believe and to take it on faith.' 'God is angry with the unbeliever,' and 'it is only a snare the Devil is putting in your way.' 'Be careful; the Devil is whispering in your ear all the doubts you have.' 'You know he is a liar and deceiver, and rejoices when you doubt.' 'The Devil is the great adversary of your souls, and he would drive God from you.' 'Watch and pray, and have faith, and you will be saved at the last day.' That, and a great deal more of such nonsense, is preached, and is the burden of the vast majority of ministers. But when some minister would talk and think of God in a rational way and manner, the cry is raised: 'Unorthodox;' 'heretical;' 'schismatic;' 'forsaking the faith of the fathers;' 'going back on the teachings of the Church,' and 'he is going to hell himself, and will carry his congregation with him if they believe in his teachings. Try him; turn him out; close his lips!'"

"You are pretty hard down on us ministers," put in the Doctor, "and do not give us credit for preaching the truth as we believe and understand it."

"In a qualified sense," replied the Devil. "As a paid

attorney who works his feelings up in a bad case, he really begins to believe he has the law and evidence on his side, and then a desire to believe goes a long way. You are paid to preach a certain creed, dogma, or faith, and it becomes your bread and meat, and, with that, it soon becomes your convictions. The brain and the belly are in close co-partnership. You don't want to investigate; you don't want to review; you don't want new facts, new truths, new translations, for they will upset old ideas; but satisfied with the mental rut you are in, the dry rot of the brain begins."

"You are terrible in your charges!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"Then why do you—of course, I mean all churches—read out of the Church, denounce, anathematize any minister who changes his belief and leaves you? Why not give him the credit of honest intentions and an enlightened understanding, and a review of his past education and teaching? Investigation means development, deep study, and mental growth. The only merit of an old rut of thought is that it is old, but not necessarily correct. Old men are not necessarily wise, and neither are old ideas necessarily true. I know that as concerning God and myself."

"How is that?" asked the Doctor.

"Simple enough," replied the Devil. "Moses's idea of God was terrible. Read the first five books of the Old Testament. A jealous God; a wrathful God; a bloody God. One pleased with bloody altars. One quick to take revenge. Partial, making covenants with individuals, repenting Himself, etc. Old ideas, you see. Now read the New Testament. Jesus calls Him Father; you

mortals were His children, and He loved you. He sent His Son to die for you. He was love, slow to anger and full of mercy, etc. No wonder the old one-idea Jews did not like his new ideas. He was not orthodox—turn him out. Paul told Felix he was called a religious heretic. Jesus did not want bloody altars, but a pure heart. See you no difference in the teachings of Moses and Jesus, both Jewish teachers? But Moses lived fourteen hundred and ninety-one years before Jesus. No growth of thought in all of that length of time? Jesus got out of the old Jewish rut of thought, and He was bitterly denounced by the Jewish high priests. He lost His life because He was an original and bold thinker, clashing with old ideas, and power to back them. He told the simple, plain truth about God's nature as He understood it; that, and nothing more. I am not the enemy of God, or Jesus, or you mortals. I wish none harm."

"Well! well!" exclaimed the Doctor. "One who did not know you, would really think you a reformer of men, and a lover of right living."

"That is just what I am," said the Devil. "God permits me to live, to let you mortals know that there are rewards and punishments after death. That He, and He alone, holds in His omniscient and omnipotent hands the scales of eternal justice, and that He will reward the good and punish the evil. Having given to you mortals a free will to act as you please, carries with it a responsibility of freedom for which He will hold you responsible. I am His sheriff to execute His commands. Hell is His jail, and I the principal keeper. I know my duty when you mortals are sent to me by the Eternal Judge of the universe."

"I have not another word to say," replied the Doctor.

"Then," said the Devil, "I will give you a friendly lecture."

"Hold a few moments," asked the Doctor. "I am interested in your opinion of the different religious sects, or denominations, as we call them. Who is nearest right and who farthest wrong?"

"You make me smile," replied the Devil. "Do you not know, as a D.D., that all of your so-called churches, creeds, dogmas, and confessions of faith are man-made affairs? The result of mere mental reason, of analysis and synthesis? A pulling apart and a putting together to suit this or that mind? Your so-called churches are very much like your church buildings, built to suit your taste or the taste of the architect. All brain work, and nothing else."

"Do I understand you to say," asked the Doctor, "that there is nothing of inspiration in any of our creeds or faith? That the Fathers of the Church only gave their private opinion as to what they thought was truth, and then gave their opinions to the world?"

"Exactly, certainly," smiled the Devil; "and what ridiculous stuff they made of much of their creeds and dogmas! One set calling another heretics. Even your St. Paul and your St. Peter did not agree as to the teachings of Jesus, who left nothing on record, nor did He ever write a line as to any particular faith or belief. He never thought for a moment that His teachings and acts would be so torn, tortured, travestied, twisted, theorized, and thaumatolatrized into meaning any and every thing to suit or please the theological fancies of theological

theorists. To tell you the truth, if you can bear it or believe it, Jesus taught that the world was near an end, and some would see it who were living. That is why He never wrote anything. See Matt. xvi. 28."

"I do not exactly understand you," said the Doctor. "Please explain yourself."

"Simple enough," replied the Devil. "His life was His gospel, His faith, and His creed; hence He wrote nothing. 'Follow Me,' He said; nor did He expect you mortals to follow the blind theories of your so-called saints. He lived and died in vain if His life was not gospel and faith enough for you mortals."

"That looks sensible and reasonable," remarked the Doctor. "But what must we do with the writings of His inspired Apostles?"

"Who said they were inspired?" asked the Devil. "Were they inspired when Paul, Peter, Barnabas, Mark, and Silas were quarrelling among themselves? Read your Bible more closely; especially Acts xv. 32-40. You claim for them more than they ever claim for themselves. They were mortals, with their likes and dislikes, just as you are with your brethren and members of your church. They had their peculiar theories, and each taught to suit himself. Paul said he would live to see Jesus coming in the clouds. Did he? And if he did, when was it? Have you any record of the fact? Peter taught the same idea, but he died without ever seeing Jesus. Please remember that imagination, aspiration, hallucination, warm declamation, with considerable perspiration, is not inspiration or illumination."

"You astonish me!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"It is astonishing how the simple, plain truth aston-

ishes the minds of those who hug a creed or faith, or swear by the dogmas of some church," said the Devil. "You do not want to be convinced of any truth which conflicts with your church; and you read, reason, and argue, not for truth, but to convince yourself that you are right now, and have been right all the time."

"Something in that," replied the Doctor.

"Yes," said the Devil. "Your creeds and faith are all man-made. To illustrate: You and your congregation desire to build a church edifice, and you have on hand so many thousand of brick, stone, lime, and lumber. You advertise for plans, stating what you have on hand, and want an edifice that will use the material on hand. A dozen architects draw plans, and present for your inspection and approval. No two buildings are alike, yet any of them would do to worship in. You take the plan that suits your taste, and reject the others. Just so with your theological architects. You take the Bible, cull out and garble passages here and there in it, and call it the Word of God, and upon it build a creed, a dogma, a faith, and a belief. You call it a church, and then you have a church of Predestination and Election; or a church of Free Grace and Free Will; or a church of Immersion or Baptism; or a church of Apostolic Succession; or a church holding the keys of heaven and hell in hand; or a church believing in God, and Jesus as His messenger, but not divine in His nature. I cannot begin to enumerate the faiths from Peter and Paul down to present date; they number hundreds, and fire and torture were active in many churches to make converts."

"I see the point," said the Doctor; "and there is much truth in what you say."

"Such is my opinion about your sects and denominations; good enough for theological theories and fine-spun ideas of God. But the only church that I would worship in, were I a mortal, would have but one great truth."

"What is that?" interrupted the Doctor.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," replied the Devil.

"I have not another word to say," said the Doctor. "That covers every thing. Give me your hand; we can be a unit on that, if nothing else."

"Stop!" said the Devil. "I do not shake hands with everybody, D.D.'s not excepted. I do not care to be on familiar terms with you mortals, for if I did, they would grow too presumptuous. I have enlightened you, but do not seek familiarity."

"Excuse me," said the Doctor, "I am ready to hear your lecture."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DEVIL LECTURES REV. DR. DEVINE—HIS CLOSING ARGUMENT IN HIS SELF-DEFENCE—DR. DEVINE'S SERIOUS REFLECTIONS.

“REVEREND DOCTOR DAVID DEVINE, hear me! Like all mortals, you are groping in darkness about conditions beyond the grave of which you can know nothing until you are called hence. God is love; God is mercy; God is your Father; but he is nevertheless a God of eternal justice. He has given to every mortal a book to keep; a book in which you do write down hourly, daily, and yearly every deed you do. That is the judgment book which will be opened to you at your final trial on the day of your death, immediately, instantaneously. The record of that book will open to you a new life of happiness, or send your soul to hell in my keeping.

“Remember that the book you keep, records your thoughts, desires, intentions, and deeds. As long as you mortals keep chained in your thoughts an evil desire or deed, you keep chained a devil; but the moment an evil deed is done, a devil is turned loose, and that devil will meet you and stand by your side in the day of your final trial. He will be a witness against

you; not I, nor will any mortal testify against you. There will be to some mortals many devils as witnesses against them. Their evil deeds will be in their own handwriting. See to it that you keep in check and under full control the devils in your mortal nature and mental make up. Fear your book, but do not fear me. Fear God, and you will fear the record you will make against yourself. No prayers from the lips of others can save you; no church, no creed, no faith. Deeds, good or evil, will be either your smiling angels or condemning devils. Your thoughts are but shadows. Your deeds are material, they have substance and life in them. You will be judged for what you do, not for what you think.

“If you have done well, you will be rewarded well. If premeditated evil or wrong you did, punishment will surely follow. If sudden temptations and frailties have sometimes overtaken you, and you have gone astray like David of old, His mercy and justice will take into consideration such temptations and frailties of the flesh, and forgive you; but not habitual vice and wrong-doing. If you have wronged your fellow man with premeditated anger, or for gain have slain him; if you have deliberately lied, stolen, deceived, and taken advantage of ignorance, virtue, and confidence; if for gain and wealth you have been unjust, then His justice—as God alone deals with justice—you will hear your sentence: ‘Depart! your life has been full of evil, wrong, and injustice. Depart from me!’ A God of all mercy and forgiveness would be an unjust God to the good of earth who feared, adored, and worshipped Him, and who lived up to the talents given them. God reads your thoughts,

and knows the virtue of all your actions. Good done for sinister ends is evil in His sight. Sudden temptations and fallings, where the heart was taken by surprise, and the mind unprepared to resist, will be judged by Him. But mark me well—deliberate villainy will be damned, and the sinning immortal then will be sent to hell and to me to be punished. God sentences: I execute His will. Do you understand?

“I want you to cease misrepresenting me in your pulpit as you have been doing. You are honest in what you say and believe, but ignorant. God is also merciful to the ignorant mortal who sins ignorantly. The honest heathen who prays to his idol or his fancied god, and lives up to his belief, will find his heaven; and that heathen who does wilfully wrong, will also find his hell. Tell the truth about me as an intelligent world now views me to-day. Do not go back three, two, or one thousand years ago, to retail to your hearers the fanciful idea of a Devil going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he can devour. Such thoughts belong to an ignorant and superstitious age; they may suit children, but not men of your education.

“You are living now in the last years of the nineteenth century, as you mortals reckon. A mighty leap from the days of Jesus to one thousand eight hundred and eighty years after Him. Thought has not been idle; science, art, investigation, and research have done their work, and done it effectually. To-day, when a man is a lunatic, he has not a devil in him, but a diseased body and mind. To-day devils are not cast out of men by legions and ask permission to enter hogs. The Jewish dislike to the hog tells the story; for, as you know, there

were two things that a good and pious Jew—one faithful in keeping the law—had a most supreme contempt for; and that was to keep hogs and to teach his son Greek. Devils and hogs were synonymous in his mind. To-day, when men, figuratively speaking, say: ‘That man has the devil in him,’ they mean he is full of liquor, or that his bad and uncontrollable passions have taken possession of him. But when he quits his evil ways, they say: ‘The grace of God has reached his heart.’

“Men and women are what they make themselves: not what I make them, or God makes them. God will never collar a man or woman and drag them unwillingly into heaven. His predestination runs in no such channel. I am not permitted to take any mortal down to hell unless God sends him to me. I have nothing to do with you mortals while on earth or in the flesh. I have made no law for your rule of action. You cannot sin against me. I have not made any sacrifices for you in any way. I have never loved or hated you. I have never sent any son to die for you because I loved you. I have given you no code of morals by which to govern your life. I have never told you to love me, or hate me, with all your soul, body, and mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself. You can do as you please. You are free to make the most of this beautiful world God has given you; to abuse yourself or damn yourself; to live well, and up to the law given you by Jesus; for He was sent to point to you the manner and the way in which you could become reconciled to God. He made no atonement for you, but put you in communication with God, so that you could make your own atonement. Jesus is not pleading to-day with God for you, but leaving you

to do your own pleading through prayer, good deeds, a just life, and right living.

“To be good or bad is all the same to me. God will judge you, not I. Teach your hearers to fear God, to obey His laws, to deal justly with one another, for you are all God’s children, and then you will never be sent to hell and to me. I have no interest in you mortals whatsoever. No more than the sheriff of your county has with the men who pass him daily, if they obey the laws. He has no interest in putting any one in jail, nor can he unless there is some authority given him so to do. If the judge should order him to arrest a man he would do it, for it is his business to obey the power above him. Your sheriff can do nothing of himself unless there is a law back of him. So with me; obey the law of God, and you have nothing to fear from me. The prisoner does not fear the sheriff, but the judge who will pass sentence upon him; for from the lips of the judge will depend his life, or his freedom, long or short.

“Fear God; He is your Judge, not I. Fear Him who Jesus said could destroy both soul and body in hell. Cease misrepresenting me, and preach the fear of God, and you will then get on, and keep on the true line of thought and the orthodox teachings of the Bible as to God.

“You have been taught in that Book that ‘the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.’ Preach that, preach it often, preach it effectually. If the fear of the Devil is the incentive to make men better, they are only better so long as the fear lasts; and that is the meanest of all feelings of the human heart. Do not preach anything

about golden crowns, golden harps, or golden streets, for they are but the wild fancies of the brain—Jewish imagery to win devotees—or, if not that, the meanest incentive in life for a man to do right, to be bribed by a gift to do right. Do right because it is right to do right. You would bribe him with a reward, when you mortals should be taught to fear and adore God.

“To fear God is to adore Him, for that fear ripens into obedience, and then adoration and love; and love is the ripe fruit of the heart—that unselfishness which makes the heart the garden of Paradise. I fear God because I am not permitted to love or adore Him; for if I did He would pardon me, and again restore me to the bright inheritance which I lost by sin and disobedience. I am forever lost! lost! lost! I was an immortal spirit, and not born of earth. My sin is past forgiveness, and I warn you mortals to fear God and not me.”

“Why! why!” exclaimed the Doctor, “you are something of a minister, after all; and if you were in the pulpit——”

“I would knock your old worn-out creeds, false dogmas, blind faiths, unreasonable beliefs, and confessions of faith to hell; or, if not just there—for they are not wanted there—I would at least banish them from the minds of you mortals. I would feed you on the meat of plain truth, and no longer fill the minds of congregations with a milk-and-water faith. Mental babes might thrive on it, but not strong, intellectual minds. You must outgrow your narrow creeds about me. See me, think of me, talk of me, and preach of me in the light of this age in which you live, and draw not upon the igno-

rance and superstitions of the dead, buried, and forgotten past. I have neither hoofs, horns, nor tail.

"The world is growing fast in thought, and you should recognize such a fact. Jesus recognized the thought and development of his day, though a long way ahead of His times; and when He sent His disciples out to preach His Gospel—for He was a reformer—He did not tell them to preach the old Mosaic law. There was in Him a refreshing example of originality and boldness. Oh that you ministers were not such cowards! The people are not fools, and can appreciate a new truth as soon as they hear it. They are tired of old and worthless creeds of faith. I am a necessary end for God's purposes; for, if I were not, He would not permit me to exist. You recognize that truth and should preach it, perfectly regardless of all the preconceived opinions about me. A minister should be, of all men, one filled to overrunning with a bold, aggressive moral courage—such a man as Paul. You know what he suffered and what he said: 'I have fought a good fight.' He did not say he had won the fight, but he was conscious he had fought a good one, or the best that was in him. If he had won the fight he would not have suffered. He was conscious, however, that he had given Greek mythology a fatal stab, and so he had. Be brave; be fearless; give to your mind full play; and, above all things, be true to thine own self and you will be true to God. Do not fear your congregation; be a faithful teacher and leader. Preach what you honestly believe deep down in your own soul, and what you say to yourself in this study.

"And now, Reverend Doctor David Devine, I take

my leave of you, hoping that you may be in the future a wiser and better man for having conversed and argued with the Devil. May you, when you shall be called hence in coming years to give an account of yourself to God for the deeds done in the body, not for eloquent or good words said, but good deeds done, and receive His smile and welcome, be permitted to enjoy that bright home which I lost by my sin of great ambition. May God bless you, for He is the only One who can. We part, never to meet again on earth; and if heaven is your eternal home, you will never think of me again. Alas! alas! for those who will be sent to me. I bid you——”

“Hold! hold!” exclaimed the Doctor. “Just one question more!”

“What is it?” asked the Devil.

“Tell me, oh, tell me, do you ever receive from the Almighty Judge a command to unbar the prison gates of hell and free some pardoned soul?” asked the Doctor.

“That is a question,” said the Devil, “you have no right to ask or to inquire into while in the flesh; it will be revealed to you beyond the grave; it belongs not to finite knowledge to know. However, I will tell you this much: that when you mortals hang a man for murder, it is eternal death to him, so far as you can make it. You never recall him back to life; the extreme penalty of the law is visited upon him for all time. When you send a criminal to the penitentiary for life, and he serves out a part of his sentence and a pardon comes to him, the majesty of violated law has been vindicated, and his pardon is ‘mercy.’ Where the crime has been more of omission than commis-

sion, the punishment is not so severe; but sin must be punished. God has more of love and mercy for you mortals—but my lips are sealed. I say no more. Farewell.”

The Devil disappeared in a light of his own creating, as bright as that of a calcium light, and left behind him for the first time a very strong smell of sulphur.

DR. DEVINE'S REFLECTIONS.

“Verily, verily,” said the Doctor to himself, after his surprise had passed away, “the Devil is an amazing spirit, and has a wonderful knowledge of things past; in fact, he has been an actor in them; and yet he does not show a particle of age. A thousand years is nothing to him; he talks of that as if it were but yesterday. He is no atheist, that is sure; he is no agnostic, if I may coin such a word; he is no skeptic, for he says he knows, and a skeptic is a doubter; he is no scoffer, for he talks of God with reverence, and Jesus as a reformer of the Jewish religion; and, after all, he talks plain, common, hard sense, when you look at religion from a common-sense standpoint; but which, I must confess, we ministers are afraid to do. I know not what to think of him. I cannot admit all of his positions, though he fortifies them fairly with arguments which look plausible and reasonable, and in the light of facts and results they are. If he was in the pulpit, he would hold the mirror up to every man and woman’s face, and make them see themselves as they really are. He does not claim any man’s passions, vices, or inclinations as the work of his influence, or at his suggestion. He would make every

man stand alone in the nakedness of his own innate nature. We are too prone to lay our passions and frailties upon others, or as suggestions coming from the Devil, when they are really a part of us, as much so as our very souls within us.

“The Church must review its old teachings, as Jesus reviewed the teachings of Moses about God. I must cease to lay all evil at the door of the Devil, and simply give ‘the Devil his due.’ From this time out, I will preach the fear of God, and not the fear of the Devil; and if I cannot reach the consciences of men through the fear of God, it is certain I cannot reach them through the fear of the Devil. There are thousands who do not believe in any Devil at all, while the same will believe in some kind of God. The absurdity of such reasoning is, that God will not draw any line of distinction between good and evil deeds in this life. If there is a heaven, and that means some sort of reward for good doing, there must be a hell for evil doing. If, then, there is a God, it stands to reason there ought to be a Devil as God’s jailer. The Devil is clear enough on that point to convince any thinking man. A good and just father will draw a line of distinction between those sons who do his will and try to please him, from those sons who will none of his reproof or regard his will. He cannot love and reward them alike, unless he is indifferent to all obedience. I reason from natural law to spiritual law. From high honors among men for good conduct, to the felon in jail, condemned to death. Be that as it may, I will preach more of God in the future, and less of the Devil. I will have to stretch my Calvinism to suit the thoughts and reasonings of the times. Other churches

will fall into line, and let the Devil have a rest. Well, I am wiser and better for my arguments with the Devil. He has done me good; he has put me to thinking. New thoughts but develop the mind and make man better."

DUE FEB 18 1966

